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BEFORE THE LEAVES FALL ?

"GERMANY is finished. The war will be over in the autumn." That, according to report, is what German prisoners are saying in France. We are sure they are saying it, with even more certainty, in vast cages of prisoners on the Russian front. And all of us in England, on all fronts and throughout Europe, are asking whether we dare to hope for the end of war in Europe before next winter. Among people who have experienced the strains and disappointments of nearly five years of war optimism is apt to be dismissed as wishful thinking. But wars are normally decided long before the approach of the end becomes visible: it was only after the publication of German war histories that it became known how clearly the leaders of Germany realised in August 1918 that the war could not be carried on longer than a few months. To-day we cannot be sure whether the same conviction has penetrated the minds of Hitler and his associates; the Führer has declared that he will fight on till five minutes past twelve, and the leaders of the Nazi regime have little personally to hope from capitulation. Yet assuming, as we may do, that the Allies continue this summer in unison to use all their resources, moral and material, there seems a real possibility of the end of hostilities in Europe before the leaves of autumn are off the trees.

Two factors support this conclusion. First, there is the degree of material disintegration in the enemy's ranks which the first phase of the Red Army's summer offensive has brought about with sensational speed. In a single fortnight the Central Group of German Armies, comprising (it has been reported) no fewer than 50 divisions, has been decisively routed and swept out of White Russia with the loss of half its effectives. In the centre of the Russian advance Minsk has fallen, and so have Polotsk and Slutsk on the two flanks. Unchecked as yet by any serious opposition from the remnants of Field-Marshal Busch's once powerful army group, the Russians are sweeping on towards the Warsaw-Dvinsk railway and East Prussia, threatening as they advance to cut off the German armies in the Baltic States. The fate of Busch's army group is not in itself decisive for the Reich. There are still, it must be remembered, perhaps 100 German divisions south of the Pripet Marshes who have to be engaged and worsted; and in the West the Allied forces have still to convert their initial victory in securing a firm bridgehead into a successful campaign of movement against the 50 or 60 divisions which Field-Marshal von Runstedt holds in France. Allow for all this and for other doubtful factors, and it remains true that the Red Army's victory in White Russia is a terrific portent. What can be done once can be done again. It is clear that the Wehrmacht is no longer a match for the Russian forces on the Eastern front, just as it is clear that Field-Marshal Kesselring is no longer in a position to hold up the Allied advance in Italy, and that once the Allies in the West have mastered the armoured divisions which Rommel, with a gambler's instinct, has staked in the battle for Calvados, the German garrison in France (comprising, as it does, many semi-static divisions of indifferent quality) may crumble quickly.

The second fact which appears to warrant optimism is the marked increase in the proportion of German commanders and soldiers who have been laying down their arms on both Eastern and Western fronts when they considered that honour had been satisfied. An instructive incident was the surrender of a German garrison in Cherbourg while it still had a full stock of arms and equipment and the possibility of long and bloody resistance. It yielded to the persuasion of a loud-speaker van, after well-timed leaflets had done their work.

It would be unwise to infer from such surrenders that morale in the German armies is finally degenerating, or that defeatism has reached such a point that stern resistance is no longer likely. The capitulation of nearly a dozen generals certainly seems significant, and—from another point of view—the lack of ruthlessness displayed by the Germans in face of the very remarkable Danish strike would appear to betoken loss of grip in face of an increasingly menacing movement of resistance throughout the occupied countries. We have seen, however, in Italy how Kesselring's army managed to pull itself together after its apparent disintegration following the battle for Rome, and there is little doubt that, so long as they see no logical alternative, the majority of German soldiers will go on fighting with endurance from one defeat to another. Indeed, if no authority emerges on their side which can conclude an armistice, it is conceivable that they may go on fighting back to the German frontier, and even within the Reich itself, so long as any groups of organised resistance can be sustained.

In these circumstances, if Europe is to be spared the horrors of another winter of war, the task before the leaders of the United Nations is to bring to bear against the German army, not merely the whole weight of their armed forces, but the maximum pressure of political warfare. There are bitter hatreds within the ranks of Germany's leaders; upstart Nazis and old-fashioned Junker generals do not love one another, and there is beneath the surface, ready to break out when the Wehrmacht is defeated, the pent-up resentment of millions of German and foreign workers, now said to be making common cause.

Political warfare must be based on a realistic analysis. Immediately, we are concerned with rulers with whom there can be no question of bargaining. German spokesmen have declared that Germany is willing to abandon the attack on England by robot planes if we give up the strategic bombing of targets in Germany. Obviously, we shall enter into no bargain not to bomb with all our might the oil plants and other military targets of Germany, but our reply, which should be dinned into German ears, is that, if the German armies lay down their arms, the bombing of Germany will cease forthwith. One way or another we must convince the German people, as we have not yet convinced them, that there is a thinkable alternative to going on fighting. Even to-day we might succeed in doing this if we assured them that by surrendering they could save their lives and preserve their cities from further destruction; that the victorious Allies do not propose to put Germany to fire and sword; and that, in due course—we cannot say when—a revolutionised Germany will have a chance again to take its place in the comity of nations.

The Threat to China

The present Japanese offensive along the Hankow-Canton railway—the lifeline of Chinese communications—has met with little resistance from the ill-equipped and often under-nourished Chinese army. If they continue at this rate, the Japanese will soon cut China in two by holding an interior line of communication from Manchuria to South China. The reported capture of Hengyang means the loss of an advance air base from which American pilots have given effective assistance to the Chinese. Perhaps the best chance of staving off this dangerous threat to China's rich interior provinces and to the vital air-fields that are within it, would be an air reinforcement on a large scale. On the periphery of China, military and naval successes are helping to cut off some of Japan's farthest outposts. The capture of Mogaung isolates the Japanese garrison of Myitkyina, whilst in West Yunnan General Wei Li-huang's troops have regained some of the positions they lost when driven out of Lungling two weeks ago. The American navy and air victory at Saipan gives them a valuable base for their coming assault on the Japanese mainland. Important as these outlying victories are, they cannot have a quick effect on the military, economic or political conditions inside China. Chiang Kai-shek, whose leadership after seven years of war remains unchallenged (though there is increasing criticism of several of his Ministers), has recently made a useful concession in the Kuomintang-Communist struggle by removing the ban on the visit of foreign journalists to the Communist areas. Such small improvements on the political front may have important effects on Chinese morale and result in freeing some of China's best trained and most experienced guerrilla fighters who are immobilised at this moment when they are most needed.

Stormy Outlook for Argentina

It has taken the British and American Governments more than five months to decide that the Farrell regime in Argentina is sufficiently unfriendly to the United Nations to warrant the return of their ambassadors " for consultation." During this time both Sir David Kelly and Mr. Armour have occupied an ambiguous and difficult position. They were unable to do anything which might be construed as recognition; at the same time they have apparently been expected to continue as much of their normal duty as possible. The explanation for this extraordinary situation can only be that both Powers were hoping that General Farrell would make sufficient changes in the façade of his administration to permit at least a limited form of recognition. Both of them were unwilling, for economic as well as political reasons, to relinquish their contacts with the Argentine. But Farrell has either traded on that or chosen to ignore it altogether and continued to lead Argentina along a totalitarian and war-like path. We remember that the Allies never denied recognition to Ramirez, whose foreign and domestic policies were avowedly fascist; that trade agreements very favourable to Argentina were concluded between Ramirez and this country; and that both Britain and America have so far been extremely reluctant to make any outspoken denunciation of the use of Argentina as a base for fascist intrigues throughout South America. If at last we have discovered that British and American ambassadors ought not to be in Buenos Aires, and Washington has begun to hint at sanctions to curb or upset the Farrell regime, it is clear that the threat to American security has become so great that here too, appeasement must be abandoned. There are ugly reports of Argentina war preparations, and firebrand nationalist propaganda, directed not merely at all democratic states in Latin America, but specifically at Argentine's neighbour, Uruguay. How far General Farrell is merely imitating the technique of his Nazi tutors and how far he can substantiate his threats, it is difficult to say. But Argentina remains a danger spot on the underbelly of the New World.

The Planners Revolt

The Government's Town and Country Planning Bill is rejected by everyone, except the representatives of the property-owners, who have been most indiscreetly fulsome in their praise. It is evident that the Bill's financial provisions will maintain or increase the value of the land—a condition which makes dead against decentralisation or the creation of new or satellite towns—and that the provisions of assistance for slum-clearances are even more unsatisfactory. As for the White Paper, none, except the property-owners, appears to like it any better than the Bill, or to suppose that it affords a practicable basis for long-term planning. The five great Associations, which represent the local authorities in this country in conjunction with the L.C.C. and the City of London Corporation, have put on record their " keenest and most profound disappointment " with the Bill, and given a reasoned statement of their objections to the Government's policy. A group of Labour M.P.s immediately put down a motion for the rejection of the Bill; and the Labour Party as a whole is being subjected to the blandishments of Mr. Bevin and Sir William Jowitt, who apparently hope to persuade Labour, as Lord Woolton hopes to persuade the local authorities, that the decision not to plan can be remedied by a few parliamentary amendments. The Labour Ministers, who probably themselves have no liking for the bill, look like having to face an awkward time if they try to make their party stand by the Government in face of its almost unqualified surrender to reactionary interests.

The Meaning of Full Employment

Sir William Beveridge, in his speech at Sheffield last week-end, lent the full weight of his authority to a criticism of the Government's White Paper on Employment Policy, very much on the lines on which we criticised it when it appeared. He pointed out how very far the policy of the White Paper falls short of what can properly be called " Full Employment," how impracticable it is to correct the fluctuation of private investment by using " public works," in the ordinary sense of the term, as a balancing factor, and how completely the White Paper, in its concentration on ironing out the trade cycle, misses the point that what is required is a continuous means of keeping consumers' demands up to a high enough level to ensure full employment of the available resources of production. It is not enough, Sir William emphasises, to increase the total volume of available employment—even if the White Paper went that length—it is necessary to ensure that the employment shall be rightly related to the types of labour that are available. In other words, full employment demands a balanced programme of production, and cannot be secured by switching people continually to and fro between their normal jobs and " public works." Finally, Sir William states—rightly—that the only acceptable definition of " full employment " is a state of affairs in which there are more employers looking for workers than workers looking for jobs.

Trade Unionism Returns

The Italian Trade Unions have now reconciled their differences and, in agreement with the Bonomi Government, have set up a new Italian Confederation of Trade Unions representing all the three main tendencies. Previously, though the Communists and Socialists had agreed to work together, the Catholics had failed to reach full agreement with the other groups, and had maintained a provisional organisation of their own. The coming together of all the anti-Fascist Trade Union bodies into a single group, and the recognition accorded to the new body by the Government, are events of good augury for the future not only of Italian Labour, but of European Labour as a whole; for one of the greatest dangers has been that the industrial workers would allow themselves to be again split up into sections corresponding to rival political tendencies. The Italian Trade Union movement was prone to such divisions in pre-Fascist days, and, largely for this reason, failed to offer effective resistance to Fascist penetration. Formerly one of the principal Trade Union groups was the Syndicalist; but syndicalism seems to have disappeared to-day as a separate tendency. It will not be easy to bring the Unions back into effective working order after years of compulsory regimentation in the Fascist syndicates; and of course the main strongholds of Italian Unionism, which have always been in the north, are still in Nazi hands. But a good beginning has been made.

Science and Industry

When the Cabinet comes to consider its post-war policy for scientific and industrial research, it can scarcely avoid paying close attention to the remarkable statement on this subject just issued by Nuffield College. (*Oxford Press 2s.*) This valuable and original document is based on the discussions at two private conferences held earlier this year; and it is the more interesting in that it has secured the signatures of a very wide and representative selection of eminent scientists, industrialists and academic figures. The fact that such men as Beveridge, Laski, Lord Melchett, Lord McGowan and Professor Hill reach agreement, not on platitudes, but on a very thorough and penetrating analysis, is in itself an event of some importance. The statement is confined to questions arising from the application of the physical and natural sciences to industrial development and technique; this is a field in which we lag a long way behind the U.S.A. and, probably, the U.S.S.R. But it points out that the primary difficulty is not the shortage of skilled workers, acute though that is, but the inadequate organisation of what resources we already possess and the unsatisfactory method of financing research. The statement takes a progressive and intelligent stand on the question of Government subsidy, on the proper use of university scientists, on the training of new personnel, and on the inter-relation of the research carried out by private or semi-private institutions and by scientists working specifically for the Government. Undoubtedly, there is enough material here on which to base a forward-looking and enlightened policy during the period of reconstruction. It is now up to the Cabinet to work out that policy and for the big economic interests to back up the declared support of some of their most prominent representatives.

PARLIAMENT: Another Half-loaf

Is Labour's great Land revolt, on the Town and Country Planning Bill, again to go off at half-cock? The official Labour leaders are no doubt taking the familiar line that this is as much as could have been expected from a Tory-dominated coalition, and that if this were rejected there would be no opportunity of doing anything at all in the near future for the blitzed and slum areas. Even those primarily concerned with sponsoring the Bill are understood to lack enthusiasm for it. The opposition first took shape in an unwonted and respectable section of the Labour Party.

Since the Employment debate, Parliamentary business has been somewhat meagre and scrappy. Questions have been noticeably fewer than usual, but not less varied or, some of them, trivial. At this supreme crisis of the war, the Government has been sharply tackled on stockings for physiotherapists (i.e. masseuses, or " rubbers," as hon. Members shouted they should be called); on making motor-car bumpers all the same height; on misprints in Hansard; on the unfairness of the B.B.C. in addressing its road safety " flashes " to children rather than to drivers; on the need for special trains for Lancashire holiday-makers; on the distribution of rubber as between prophylactics and dummy teats; and on those hard things that stick into your back when the arms are raised in some first-class compartments. Members no doubt felt that their *sang-froid* and attention to detail would be an example to all Southern England.

Some more serious matters also came up at uestion-time—for instance, the Moscow allegaon that flying bombs had been tested in Spain. den bluntly said that this was untrue; he had hecked up with Madrid, but refused resolutely check up with Moscow. Reminded by Pritt at his information about Spain had not always een good, he flared up and cried that he would ut his record on Spain beside Pritt's any day. "Then God help you!" shouted Pritt) and is record in 1940 beside Pritt's, too. (Pritt, esticulating amid the general hubbub: "That's challenge!") Pritt also asked about the case f an aircraftman posted home from Cairo after eing prominent on the Forces Parliament there, nd in protests against its suspension; some ervice Members opined that this wouldn't be a bad dodge for homesick men in the Middle East to copy.

Grigg announced that there had probably been no serious damage at Assisi or Perugia. Scottish Members had a day on agriculture and education, scowling Dorically at any Englishmen who crept into the Chamber. The only other full day's debate was on the Ministry of Information, which Bracken defended in his curiously uncouth, yet richly tessellated style, half-badinage, half-braggadocio. He and most of his fellow-Conservatives seemed to hope that his Ministry would die with the end of the war, though it is felt by certain "thoughtful" and "progressive" Tories that there should be a continuance of the process called Making Known the British Way of Life.

PONTIFEX MINOR

BACK TO NORMALCY?

Governor Dewey stands out in at least two espects as an unusual candidate for the American residency. He is, as politicians reckon, at 42 young man, and he was "drafted" at Chicago y a unanimous party. Does this mean that his an exceptionally magnetic and popular personlity? That is doubtful: what is clear is that e was the choice of the Republican machine, hile after Mr. Wendell Willkie's withdrawal no ival remained who enjoyed the favour of the rank nd file. The platitudinous Governer Bricker is his natural place as nominee for the Vice-residency: his chief duty will be to rally the olationist vote, for which his senior partner must ot cater. Mr. Dewey may be trusted to conduct is campaign with the vigour of youth but without its indiscretions. His speech of acceptance ombined pugnacity with caution. It hit hard at e Roosevelt Administration, but it contained othing fresh either in phraseology, thinking, or olicy. This man has energy and ambition and e shows no traces of the originality which handiapped Willkie.

Between them Governor Dewey and the Republican Platform have sketched the outlines of the oming campaign. Its negative side is as prominent as it is obvious. Mr. Roosevelt and his olleagues are "stubborn men, grown old and ired and quarrelsome in office": an end must e put to "one-man government." With characteristic exaggeration the Platform even declared at if Mr. Roosevelt should be re-elected America "would remain a republic only in name." It romised to promote an amendment to the Constitution which would forbid a President to serve r more than two terms. After this the decision ot to criticise the military conduct of the war is s surprising as it is welcome.

It is clear that the Republicans mean to concentrate their attack entirely on the New Deal. On oreign policy they have little to say that is distinctive. The Platform adopted Mr. Hoover's iew that the children of subjugated Europe could nd should have been fed, and it called for the pening of Palestine to unrestricted Jewish immigration. For the rest it was perfectly orthodox nd had nothing of its own to contribute to the eace Settlement. Mr. Dewey has been rather older, but he has given his approval to a lasting lliance with Great Britain and to what he called "durable cohesion" (a neat politician's phrase) mong the Big Four. If he has any ideas of his wn about the future organisation of the world e was careful not to obtrude them. What was gnificant was his belief that a solution can be ached which unites the American people. He eans to keep in the middle of the road, for he pudiated both the isolationists and those who ould "renounce all sovereignty and join a superstate." Whether he is prepared for any surrender sovereignty at all he did not tell us. Not much n be inferred from the simple formula,

> America will participate with other sovereign nations in a co-operative effort to prevent future wars.

hich gave us as much of his mind as he red to disclose—or perhaps himself knew.

The phrasing came straight out of the Party's Platform, which concealed the thoughts of its drafting committee with more than the customary discretion. Nothing further can be deduced from it save that the Republican machine has lost its fear of "an international tribunal to deal with justiciable disputes." The clumsy sentence[*] in which it defined its readiness to join in measures to cope with future aggression may point to the creation of an authority with power to order effective action, but it may mean no more than a readiness to enter into consultations. In any event, the repeated stress on the word "sovereignty" probably means that on the Council of the future League the United States will retain her right of veto—that is to say, she will participate in action only when she is convinced that it will serve her interests. That is, doubtless, as far as any Congress that is likely to emerge from this election would be willing to go. Insufficient though it seems to us, it marks a considerable advance, since it pledges America to join with others in formal conversations *with a view to action*. It is reasonably certain that the ambiguous term "peace forces" does not point to the creation of a standing international police. Failing that advance, each of the three giants will retain its colossal armaments, and behind the facade of a World-League the reality will be an extremely precarious balance of power.

Governor Dewey and his party reached the real business that interests them in their assault on the New Deal. As far as words go, they have declared for an unqualified return to *laisser-faire*. That is the meaning of Mr. Dewey's prayer "that this nation under God may continue in the years ahead a free nation of free men." A study of the Platform makes it clear that what God especially dislikes is any interference with the unlimited freedom of private enterprise. He is hostile to any federal action which limits the discretion of States and cities, but what He abominates is federal expenditure for social purposes. This godly party pledges itself, accordingly, to "rigid economy" and the reduction of taxation.

What in concrete terms does this rhetoric mean? We doubt whether Mr. Dewey, in the not very probable event of his election, would venture to scrap the New Deal's innovation of insurance against unemployment. In spite of the advocacy of "free" labour in the Platform, he would not risk an open attack on the right of combination, nor would he dare to repeal the Wagner Act, which establishes the right of collective bargaining. It is clear, however, that the administrative procedure by which that right was made effective would pretty certainly be swept away. In spite of a naïve sentence which assures us that "small business is the basis of American enterprise," few will fail to recognise in this Platform and this speech the authentic voice of Big Business, which resents control but expects the support of tariffs and subsidies. Though the Platform tried to face both ways, what it chiefly emphasised was the need for "a fair protective tariff," and though it gave its approval (as Mr. Dewey also did in a talk to the Press) to bilateral trade agreements, it insisted that these must be "approved by Congress"—a restriction which Mr. Cordell Hull escaped.

All this is common form: the Republican Party is going back to "normalcy," as it did under Mr. Harding and Mr. Coolidge after the last war. It promises to govern as little as possible, and to do nothing with the vigour and ability congenial to a team of young men. What was unexpected was Mr. Dewey's attack on the Democrats for their failure before this war to cure unemployment. The statement has a measure of truth: there was no cure, though there was a great reduction. We should have thought a partisan treatment of this subject risky, for organised Labour can reply by recalling the legendary proportions unemployment reached when the Republicans were last in office. The chief difference was that while Mr. Hoover left the victims in their millions to the humiliating help of private charity, Mr. Roosevelt provided relief from public funds and, better still, devised public works for every grade and kind of worker, including the artists and writers, with an imaginative care and respect as novel in American experience as they were admirable. The Republicans promise to secure "full employment." How, precisely, will they do it if they throw away the controls, pledge themselves to curtail social expenditure, and recklessly throw the reins on to the neck of private enterprise?

This speech and this Platform are, if they have the wit to understand them, a sharp challenge to American workers. One-half of them, the C.I.O., will certainly respond. For some months past it has been active on a scale unusual in the records of Labour in the United States. It has attended to the registration of the industrial workers and their wives, while in some States it has intervened in the primary elections to real purpose against reactionary candidates. In this way it defeated the chief lieutenant of Representative Dies, who conducts a perpetual purge of all progressives in the public services, and so alarmed that professional witch-hunter that he withdrew his candidature. The activity of this able and energetic organisation is, however, almost the solitary good omen we can reckon. Throughout his third term the enthusiasm of progressives for Mr. Roosevelt has been waning. His reluctance to delegate authority has hampered the efficiency of his administration. Faced with a hostile Congress, he has, perhaps intelligibly, seemed to lose interest in the New Deal. His foreign policy could hardly have been less sympathetic to popular causes if the State Department had had a Republican chief. It is fairly certain that most of these wavering followers will rally for the fourth time to the President's banner when they hear Mr. Dewey proclaiming "the God-given right of the individual to be his own master." What they might have done had Mr. Willkie appealed for their votes is less certain. Apart from this, apathy, as is usual in times of boom, threatens the Democrats more heavily than their rivals. It is they again who are likely to be the chief sufferers by reason of the absence of the younger and less prosperous strata of the nation's manhood in the army or on munition work. Against all this has to be set the strong tendency of the average man to rally to the nation's Commander-in-Chief and his dislike of "swopping horses while crossing a stream."

What results may we expect from these contrary tendencies? Big Business may control Congress, but it will be divided. It will be unanimous in fighting for a return to unfettered private enterprise, but part of it may back Mr. Roosevelt's desire to continue wartime international co-operation because it understands that Europe and the Soviet Union especially are important markets. In that case Mr. Roosevelt may return to the White House with a Congress determined to thwart him in his domestic though not in his foreign policy.

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[*] "Such an organisation should develop effective co-operative means to direct peace forces to prevent or repel military aggression."

THE FORTY-HOUR WEEK

Sir Walter Citrine has announced that one of the aims of the Trade Union Movement for the period after the war is the forty-hour week; and a good many people have promptly taken him to task for proclaiming this objective, on the ground that the war will leave the world so much poorer that more, not less, labour will be required of its workers for a considerable time to come. It is indeed curious how opinion to-day wobbles to and fro between fears of over-production arising out of the great advances in production technique and fears of poverty due to the devastation of war. It seems as if we simply did not know whether to be afraid of producing too much or too little, or of suffering from an over-supply or a deficiency of labouring power. It was much the same during the final stages of the last war; and what actually happened was that after 1918 it took Europe as a whole a number of years to regain the pre-war level of production.

For a period, at any rate, production efficiency will probably be low after this war, not only in the devastated areas of Europe, but also here and in the United States. In this country, normal industries have been put out of action to a much greater extent than they were between 1914 and 1918; and it is bound to take some time to get them back on to a sound footing, or to apply over industry generally the lessons in mass-production that have been learnt during the war in the restricted fields of munitions supply.

That, however, is a short-run problem. If we look a little further forward, we cannot contest the conclusion that productive power, over a very wide range of industries, is likely to be very much greater than it has been in the past. That is to say, we shall be technically in a position to produce the goods and services people want in considerably larger quantities and at considerably less cost in human effort. It does not, however, follow that we shall take advantage of these greater technical possibilities, any more than we were effectively using our technical powers of production between 1918 and 1939. The limits to what we actually produced between the wars were institutional rather than technical: we produced much less than we could have produced because those who were in control of production did not see their way to make profits by extending production up to, or anywhere near to, the technical limits.

It is, of course, the principal object of Sir William Beveridge and of all who demand a policy of "full employment" to resolve this conflict between the technical and institutional conditions, and to ensure that the economic system shall be so organised that nothing stands in the way of production up to the technical limit, as determined by the available supply of labour—that is to say, by the community's preference for employment as against leisure. Sir Walter Citrine's demand for the forty-hour week is in effect a demand to limit the available supply of labour, and thus to limit the technical possibilities of production.

It makes a great deal of difference whether we are in truth proposing effectively to remove the institutional limits on the volume of employment. If, for institutional reasons, there are to be labour surpluses, and monopolists and profit-seekers generally are to be allowed to rule the roost as they have done in the past, there is a great deal to be said for taking surplus labour off the market by reducing the permitted length of the working week, and thus transferring unemployment into leisure. If, on the other hand, we propose after the war to employ all the available workers in producing useful things or rendering useful services, the demand for the forty-hour week raises the quite different question whether the additional leisure is to be preferred to the higher standard of material living which could be secured by working rather more.

Regarded from this standpoint, Sir Walter Citrine's claim has a certain opportuneness. It comes pat upon the Government's White Paper announcing a policy which falls a long way short of full employment, and pat also upon a number of politico-economic manœuvres which show pretty plainly that the business world is planning to restore capitalism in its post-war forms and to oppose all attempts to outlaw its restrictive monopoly practices. Perhaps Sir Walter Citrine is really saying to the Government and the capitalists, "Oh, very well! If you are going back to restrictive capitalism which denies us higher material standards of living, at all events we will do our best to transfer as much as we can of the resultant unemployment into a widely distributed increase of leisure for our own people." We very much hope that is what Sir Walter does mean.

He may, however, mean something else; for the forty-hour week itself can be interpreted in two different ways. It may mean that men and women are forbidden by law to work normally for more than forty hours a week in return for a wage; or it may mean merely that for all hours worked beyond forty a week they have to be paid at higher overtime rates. This latter is what the forty-hour week actually meant in the United States, when it was introduced as an anti-unemployment measure in the days of the New Deal; and this was largely what it meant in France, when it was enacted in the days of the *Front Populaire*. The Government has announced in the White Paper that a part of its unemployment policy will be the stabilisation of wages except in relation to higher output. Does Sir Walter Citrine mean to reply to this threat by saying to the Government, "Very well. If you prevent the Trade Unions from raising wages, we will at any rate see to it that the employers shall pay the stabilised wages in return for a reduced amount of labour-time?"

Of course, whereas a real reduction in working hours may mean such an increase in labour efficiency per hour as to involve no rise in costs, a nominal reduction accompanied by unlimited overtime working is bound to raise costs above what they would be if the legal number of hours and the actual rates of wages were left unchanged. There are strong objections to using the nominal limitation of hours as an instrument for raising wages, except in reply to a policy deliberately designed to keep wages down. Systematic overtime is a bad method of working: it is much better to fix a reasonable working week and stick to it.

We come back, then, to the supposition that Sir Walter Citrine is demanding a real forty-hour week. He is right in demanding this, if the alternative to it is a return to unemployment on any considerable scale. But we think he would be wrong if he were to declare a preference for the forty-hour week to full employment at a somewhat higher level—say, of forty-four hours, as against the forty-eight or forty-seven which were common in 1939. At any rate for some years after the war, the shortage of supplies will be acute; and even thereafter for some time the world will be in greater need of higher material standards of living than of more leisure than is compatible with a working week of forty-four hours. It should, of course, be open to particular industries so to arrange their methods of work—for example, under three-shift systems—as to be able to reduce working hours to forty, or even fewer, without loss of output; and the case for a shorter working week in specially exacting occupations, such as coal-mining, should not be prejudiced. But as a general maximum for all trades forty hours are probably still too few to be the social *optimum*—the right compromise between the claims of work and leisure—for a society operating a policy of full employment.

Great Britain, at present, shows no sign of being such a society after the war; and accordingly we cannot associate ourselves with those who attack Sir Walter Citrine on the assumptions which imply that it does—the more so because those who attack him most vehemently are also the leading enemies of a full employment policy, or at least of the means to making such a policy practicable. The Trade Unions will be fully justified in demanding the forty-hour week until and unless they receive thorough assurances that the alternative to it is not to be unemployment in the midst of unsatisfied needs.

THE ETHICS OF THE "WESTERN MAIL"

Internal disputes between newspapers a usually better not published. The behaviour o the *Western Mail*, however, has left us no altern tive but to give a precise statement of the facts.

Early last March, during the miners' strik the *Western Mail*, which notoriously represen the outlook of the less enlightened co owners, published an inflammatory articl making the usual charges of selfishness an disloyalty against the miners. As we kne that South Wales miners are not likely t strike without reason, we asked an experience reporter to find out from miners on the spot wh were the causes of their discontent. His articl "As They See It in South Wales" gave detaile conversations with miners, and described the grievances under the Porter Award. Th accuracy of his report was confirmed by concessions shortly afterwards made to abate th grievances he described.

On June 2nd, the *Western Mail* published a extraordinary leading article headed *Facts and Fancies*. It expressed indignation that our article o March 18th had been reproduced in *Eighth Arm News* on April 25th. It deduced from these date that "*only seven days* elapsed between publicatio of the article in this country and in Italy" (ou italics). It drew the inference that "liaison" between the papers must be "perfect", and th the Government must be "subsidising a politic sheet among men on active service." It the alleged that the facts in our article had bee torn to pieces by a reply sent to us which w had refused to publish, and it read us a lecture o the ethics of journalism.

On June 9th we sent them the following reply

> Sir,
>
> My attention has been called to a leadin article headed *Facts and Fancies* which appeare in the *Western Mail*, of June 2nd. It attacks th *New Statesman and Nation* on a number of point and I should be glad if you would publish thi reply.
>
> 1. Your article begins by stating that the *Eight Army News* had republished on April 25th a article from this journal of March 18th about th coal strike in South Wales. It is some measure o the accuracy of your article that you state th "only seven days elapsed between publication i this country and in Italy," whereas on your ow showing the period is one month and seven day On the basis of this strange arithmetic, you sa that between this journal and the *Eighth Arm News* "the liaison seems to be perfect." I point of fact no liaison of any sort exists betwe the two papers and your article conveyed to u the first intimation that *Eighth Army Ne* had reprinted "As They See It In South Wales" from this journal.
>
> 2. You suggest that our article is based o inadequate information and is full of inaccuracie and misrepresentations. The truth is that a highl trained reporter made some inquiries in Sout Wales to discover what grievances were alleged b the miners on strike. His article was a report of th grievances alleged by the miners on strike, and w suspect that your chief objection to it was th opening sentences, in which we quoted from leading article in the *Western Mail* declaring th the miners were "striking a blow at the heart of th nation," etc. Our article, which did not justify th strike, condemned this dangerously partisan attitud towards a loyal body of workers and endeavoure to explain honestly to the public why these me believed themselves to be badly treated and ho such comments as yours made them feel they wer regarded as outcasts.
>
> 3. You complain that a reply was sent to th journal which was not published. You rightly sa that it is "a rule in journalism to publish correctio on matters of fact." We could wish that th admirable rule were more regularly followed in th daily press. The *New Statesman and Nation*, a weekly journal of opinion, makes a point publishing letters correcting its mistakes a challenging its opinions. In this case we recall n letter that alleged any inaccuracy of fact in o article, although we did receive a lengthy atta covering the whole ground of our article and n in our judgment convicting our correspondent any inaccuracy. This reply which was, if w

emember correctly, about the same length as the rticle it attacked, and therefore completely unusable, was sent by a member of your staff who alleged that he wrote as a private individual. We should have welcomed a letter of reasonable ength which would have started a useful controversy.

This letter was signed by the editor of the *New atesman and Nation.* To our astonishment ere appeared on June 13th the following ragraph referring to our reply, which was in elf not published :

We have received a letter from Mr. Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman and Nation,* with reference to a leading article headed "Facts and Fancies" that appeared in the *Western Mail* on June 2nd.

The article referred to the publication in the *Eighth Army News* of April 25th of an article from the *New Statesman* of March 18th about the coal strike of South Wales, and stated that "only seven days elapsed between publication in this country and in Italy." Mr. Martin points to the obvious inaccuracy, which must have been apparent to every reader, that the period between publication in both papers was a month and seven days.

Mr. Martin's letter continues: "In point of fact no liaison of any sort exists between the two papers and your article conveyed to us the first intimation that *Eighth Army News* had reprinted 'As They See It in South Wales,' from this journal."

This was not a shortened form of our letter, t a gross distortion of it, deliberately designed to e from its readers the fact that it had based attack on a gross error. The *Western Mail* s not made any apology for an attack which admits to have been based on an obvious surdity; it does not apologise to us, to the *hth Army News,* to the Government or to its ders, and although it virulently attacked us not printing the reply (which, seeing that was of article length, we were under no igation to publish), it failed altogether to blish our reply to the charges it itself levelled inst us.

Further comment seems unnecessary. No ubt the *Western Mail* relies upon its readers seeing the *New Statesman and Nation.* In s confidence it may not be wholly justified.

THE SASKATCHEWAN ELECTION

(*From a Canadian Correspondent*)

N June 15th the province of Saskatchewan held first general election since 1938. The Liberal vernment, controller of the strongest and most d-boiled machine in Canada, has gone down defeat. In its place emerges the Co-operative mmonwealth Federation (C.C.F.), previously opposition with a mere fifth of the seats, the Government controlling eighty-five cent. of the Legislature. A strong Convative bid for power yielded no seats whatr, and fears that their forty candidates would t the anti-Liberal vote to the prejudice of C.C.F. proved quite illusory.

Thus in the province in which it was founded, from which issued twelve years ago the ina Manifesto—still the basic statement of principles—the C.C.F., the Socialist party of ada, first achieves power. For the first time, it incurs the responsibility of forming a vernment. The position of that Government be difficult indeed in a situation as complid as the present. Nevertheless it is not ikely that June 15th, 1944, will later be recogd as a landmark in the progress of Socialism, only in Canada but even beyond it.

tress must be laid upon two features of this tion which mark it as specially significant the future. There is nothing necessarily ificant in the success of a protest-vote, ely as such. Canada has seen new parties rled into power on a gust of popular feeling, has watched them disintegrate almost as kly. This has happened in quite recent s and in the East as well as in the West. But e case before us the vote was no mere protest-vote. The C.C.F. was born in Saskatchewan in 1932. It has grown steadily there ever since, and has suffered no setbacks. Its support in that province has never come in large measure from the most unfortunate. Nowhere else in Canada has it been better organised; nowhere else has its educational work been more intense, sustained, or effective. The majority-vote now behind it is chiefly that of people who have studied, appraised, and decided between the alternatives before them. This fact will be widely publicised elsewhere, and is bound to be impressive.

In the second place we are confronted with the paradox that the first Socialist Government has been elected by a population in which owner-farmers predominate. Many factors have united to produce this result. Above all, the farmer has been growing more and more aware that, working ostensibly on his own and for himself, he is in essentials the hired-man of those who determine freight-rates and tariffs, who buy his cattle and hogs for slaughter and processing, who manipulate the grain exchange, and in countless other ways have deprived him of a due share of the national income. The C.C.F., on the other hand, while promising to end the exploitation of big business, has promised also to respect the farmer's title at least to the land which he operates himself. It must be remembered that the typical agricultural unit is the "family farm"—a unit whose economic efficiency is indeed becoming more and more questionable, but which presents no serious obstacle to an essential Socialism and is in any case too well established to be superseded democratically in any short period.

This lesson will not be lost upon the more conservative farmers of the East. Even in Ontario, last August, twenty-five per cent. of the C.C.F. vote was garnered in the rural constituencies. But the charge that "the C.C.F. will take away your farm" is still bruited abroad, and is still widely believed. The spectacle of Saskatchewan farmers themselves voting the party into power will rob this charge of most of its persuasiveness. (A majority of the elected representatives are indeed themselves farmers.) This election will therefore accelerate the movement of eastern farmers towards the C.C.F., and their adhesion in considerable numbers will be required before the party can be placed in the seat of real power at Ottawa.

The date of that consummation will depend also upon the conduct of the new government of Saskatchewan, and upon the measure of success which it achieves. It was pointed out in a previous letter that a principal duty of the provincial C.C.F. parties is the apparently negative one of avoiding any action which would prejudice the chances of the national party in the next General Election. This is the over-riding consideration, since the powers of the Federal Parliament, unduly limited as they are, include that of seeking their own extension, not to mention that exclusive control of banking and credit which, among others, is vital to the implementation of any comprehensive Socialist programme.

We may proceed to examine, in a general way, other considerations, and other factors, in the light of which the new Government will have to chart its course, and the progress which it can hope to make towards its Socialist destination. Pessimists will point to the limitations upon provincial powers under the constitution. They will exhibit the extra powers which the Federal Government has acquired for the duration of the war. They will deny that Saskatchewan, a poor province by comparison with some others, and with a very unbalanced economy, could finance the services which supporters of a Socialist Government will certainly expect.

Much, however, can be said on the other side. The provinces of Canada control their natural resources. Thanks to the perversion of the constitution by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council they have virtually exclusive rights to the field of social legislation. They have the power to nationalise not only natural resources such as mines, but also the physical assets at least of industrial enterprises. They have concurrent powers of "indirect" taxation: they could, for example, impose licence-fees upon private business, and conditions to be met by intending licensees. They can set up government-owned industries, and encourage, by subsidies or loans at a minimum interest, the growth of co-operatives, which are already stronger in Saskatchewan than anywhere else.

Lastly in this brief review we may speculate as to the attitude of the Federal Government, so far as it may be expressed in action. The residuary powers of the Dominion have been whittled down to a point where, except in extreme emergency, they amount merely to the negative power of disallowing provincial legislation. Mr. Mackenzie King has already shown, in the case of the unorthodox Government of Alberta, that he is not averse to the use of this prerogative. And it is obvious that the war-situation could furnish him with excuses for applying it. On the other hand, he is faced by the prospect of a General Election, which he can scarcely postpone much longer. He may find it politic to be as co-operative as his backers will allow him to be.

Mr. T. C. Douglas, the new Premier of Saskatchewan, has indicated that the provincial legislature may be called into session about the end of October—four months before the normal time. It may be possible in the interval to examine the concrete proposals on the strength of which he and his party have been elected.

Ontario: June 17th.

DOWN IN THE FOREST

(After Longfellow)

The International Monetary Conference met at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, on July 1st.

When the Great Chief of the White House
Called the tribes of men together
For a Conference on Wampum
In the forest of New Hampshire,
Came the prophets of the nations
Foremost in their craft and wisdom—
Morgenthau, State Secretary
Spokesman of the Braves of Wall St.
With the Sacred Belt of Wampum;
Keynes, the Treasury Adviser
With his belt of solid sterling,
From the wigwam of Nokomis,
Famed Old Lady of Threadneedle
Street, somewhere in Southern England—
Came the lesser tribal experts,
Came and listened in the forest,
Hearkened to the Big Chiefs' pow-wow
Underneath the fragrant pine trees.
Morgenthau and Keynes together
Wrestled while the others waited,
Smoking, hunting, shooting, fishing,
Waiting to be re-conditioned,
Waiting for a cash-transfusion
From the mighty hoard of Wampum.
Keynes and Morgenthau, the wrestlers,
Fought each point on the agenda.
Keynes urged "Be not slave to Wampum,
Throw away the truss of Wampum,
Start a Fund for prudent lending,
That all tribes of men may borrow,
Each get credit from the other.
Using anything for Wampum,
Sterling, beads or even fish bones."
Morgenthau, the Chief of Wall St.,
Tighter strapped the belt of Wampum,
"My world-bank for reconstruction
Must be on a Wampum basis."
So they reasoned as they wrestled,
While they both exclaimed together—
"Let us order world finances,
Let us keep away inflation,
Let us stabilise exchanges
For the profit of the people
Bankrupt by the fiery war-trail,
For advantage of the nations,
That the tribes of men may prosper
In the Land of the Hereafter."

SAGITTARIUS

A LONDON DIARY

Scene: a street in Central London from which a number of respectably dressed and decorous citizens arise, dusting their knees and eyeing each other a little dubiously. Then they burst out laughing, "That's the first time I've ever done that," says one. "Same here," says another. "It's about time we learnt to be sensible. We've always stood up and trusted to luck, like silly amateurs, till now. In future I shall always take what cover I can, like a soldier. It only needs a bit of courage not to be afraid someone will think you are afraid." An example was set by a well-known public man who was in a queue the other day when the droning overhead stopped. Shouting a warning to his companions, who were pretending to be unconcerned, he darted to cover; a minute later, when he looked out, the rest of the queue had been more forcibly dispersed. He is still alive and unhurt. Actually the number of people killed by these flying bombs is very small, and the damage only superficial. The trouble is glass. I cannot imagine why the public is not given far more complete and impressive instructions about blast. Powdered glass may be driven deep into you; doctors tell me that you may literally have to have your face cut right away to save your life, and that almost all of these ghastly and mostly non-fatal casualties are avoidable. When danger is immediate, lie right down, cover your face, away from glass. Have your windows thickly covered or even taken out where you can; or, if you can't do either, put a wardrobe or some other heavy object between you and the window—which, by the way, should be open. When you have eliminated this one serious risk, then add courage to sense and work on as if nothing was happening. These are the most amateur instructions, but they are fuller than any so far given by Home Security. Secrecy and pretence have done a lot of unnecessary damage and caused many avoidable casualties. Tell people that they are in the front line, that they should get their children away and go on as usual with their own job—as far as possible away from glass. Give them figures to show how small is the number of killed and give them detailed instructions about how to avoid blast. The result of a little open and intelligent leadership would be immediate and gratifying.

* * *

Not nearly enough attention has been paid to the first-class statement on Spain issued by the National Council of Labour. For the first time Labour has come out with a resounding repudiation of a bit of Churchillian foreign policy. Repudiating his "kind words" about the Spanish Government, Labour recalls that the civil war and the destruction of Spanish democracy were Franco's own handiwork; that he was aided by Mussolini and Hitler, who tried out the *Luftwaffe* at Guernica and elsewhere. To-day with Mussolini gone and the moment of liberation closing in upon Germany, British Labour sends fraternal greetings to the Spanish people and looks forward to a democratic Spain. True, strong and to the point. To us it comes as an answer to prayer. Having got so far in rediscovering itself, the National Council should go on to consider where Churchill stands and where it stands in regard to other liberation fronts—Italy, France and Greece, for example. The plots and plans for Belgium and Holland, and the schemes of vested interests to set up the old evils of pre-war capitalism all over Europe again should have its attention and be subject to its pronouncements. Something has been started.

* * *

In front of me is a leaflet, issued by the *Gospel Witness and Protestant Advocate* of Toronto. It is a reprint of a letter sent by Archbishop Sinnott of Winnipeg to Catholic parents, urging them to enrol their soldier sons as members of a "Society for the Propagation of the Faith." Reading further I see why the Reformation took the violent form it did. The document makes me feel as angry as Luther and for the same reasons!

The boy whose parents pay up and join this Catholic society automatically possesses a "guarantee, should he be killed, that he will go at once to his Maker." If, by God's will, he should escape, then membership of the Society is equally a guarantee that he will return to his family. This "each way" bet is said to be cheap at forty dollars. But to make it even easier for poor and anxious parents, instalments spread over any period up to three years can be arranged. Apparently the proposal hasn't met with the support it would seem to deserve. The Archbishop says that a few people have answered the reiterated appeal, "but all the others have maintained a stolid indifference." This is an agreeable tribute to people's good sense and respect for sincere religious principles.

* * *

This same technique is being used, though on a wider scale and for more sinister motives, by Father Coughlin in the United States. Coughlin, you will remember, was the priest who used his weekly religious broadcasts for spreading Fascist propaganda. Before the war, he threatened to use his Christian Front to "show America the Franco way," saying that "bullets instead of ballots" were what counted in politics. As late as 1938, to my knowledge, Coughlin was being openly praised and supported by the Nazi press. Quentin Reynolds, himself a Catholic, called Coughlin's paper *Social Justice* the American edition of the *Völkischer Beobachter*. Two years ago Coughlin suspended publication to avoid prosecution on a sedition charge. Before that the paper had become the most infamous Jew-baiting sheet in the world next to *Der Stürmer*. Just before it closed down, Coughlin began his latest ramp. He wanted a method of getting at the soldiers that would be more respectable and likely to pass official restrictions on political organisation in the Army. What better than the invention of the Saint Sebastian Brigade? The saint, built up as the patron saint of soldiers, was a convenient rallying-point for Coughlin's scheme. By taking out a subscription to *Social Justice*, the relatives of a soldier could have him enrolled in the Brigade. He would then enjoy the special protection of the saint and the intercession of daily prayers at Coughlin's Shrine of the Little Flower. After the paper was withdrawn, Coughlin was prepared to accept donations as a basis for enrolment, thus getting a good deal of the money he wants for subsidising his subversive activities. He also is in direct contact with about 170,000 soldiers and their relatives who might one day provide him with a nucleus for building a mass clerical-fascist movement in the U.S.A. I do not wish to exaggerate Coughlin's importance, but it should be remembered that he has very influential contacts, including, it is said, Colonel McCormick, Lindbergh, and a group of defeatist and pro-fascist senators. Though they deny the existence of any connection, there are indications of the existence of widespread conspiracy against American democracy.

* * *

The career of Norman Davis was an adequate proof that Isolation is impossible in the twentieth century, even for the United States. Presidents of both political parties made use of him as an ambassador-at-large. To meet him on one of his frequent visits was instructive and rather pathetic. I saw most of him during a week-end at Lord Lothian's house at Blickling, when the principal subject of conversation was the Manchuria war. He was stocky, benign, shrewd and infinitely full of good intentions. Whether you talked of Japan, the World Economic Conference, or Disarmament, the story was always the same. Everyone listened to him with liking and respect. During conversation the hope of American co-operation looked rosy. Afterwards people asked each other whether he was naive or whether he could really pull off any of the prospects that his close association with the President encouraged? Personally I had not much doubt about the answer. Norman Davis advocated what the most internationalist group of Americans desired. He knew, I sure, that he could not deliver the goods and we knew he could not, however sincere advocacy. And he knew that we knew that knew he was impotent to do so. So conversati was interesting, but slightly unreal and academi

* * *

In the amusing debate on the Ministry Information, Mr. Montague said two thin that are worth remembering. Quoting fr some eighteenth-century authority (please se reference) he said that Joad's "bladders philosophy enable us all to float upon surface of deep waters." The phrase appli to anyone who undertakes the necessary of popularising knowledge. Remember, to that very few people in any society di or swim without aid in the deep waters philosophy, and that some who begin by floati with the help of bladders learn later to swi while those who never learn at least have chance of appreciating the nature of the eleme in which for the first time they are immersed.

* * *

Mr. Montague also recalled how as the onl "ranker" in an officers' mess in the last war, heard the Colonel say that "everybody back England dined at eight," and how chilly was th atmosphere when he remarked "that quite number of people dined at 1.0." An illuminati story. Does one per cent. of the population dine eight? I was reminded some years ago hearing a well-to-do woman say that "no o nowadays plays tennis." If she had thought moment she might have said exactly the opposi She should have said: "My set no longe thinks tennis the game to play, because for th first time in their lives thousands of people wh have never before had the chance are learning play tennis in the parks." We need a fe statistics to amplify the following similar adages Nowadays *everyone* has (*a*) a frigidaire, (*b*) a moto car, (*c*) an education, (*d*) a w.c., or bathroo (*e*) an annual holiday with pay.

Critic

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this colum goes to M. W. Gardner.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of pape and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

In his address Mr. Bonnett described to th children how the sweet pea resembled Psalm 23.—*Bucks Free Press.*

The fullness of knowledge displayed, and th sobriety of judgment, are all the more remarkab when it is remembered that the author is an arch deacon in North Queensland.—*Times Litera Supplement.*

Explaining that as chairman of the Court Governors of Torbay Hospital he was Lord of th Manor, Mr. Ernest Hutchings, South Dev Coroner, said yesterday that the position was worth less. A predecessor had gambled heavily on spide races on hot trays.—*Daily Express.*

When Lieut. Viscount Lascelles, now reporte to have been wounded and taken prisoner in Ital was training with the Guards Division in South-We England earlier in the war, he used to send h washing home to his mother, the Princess Roy every week.—*Star.*

Nothing puts a man off so much as seeing a g paint her mouth in public with a grubby brush.—*Sunday Pictorial.*

They are glad, they are hysterical, they a sombre, they are gay, they are welcoming, su picious, joyful, weary, crazy, pious, vengefu thankful. They are all things at once, because th is no time for anything but straightforward em tion.—*Daily Express.*

FEUDAL ITALY

The following account of a farm in southern Italy reaches us from a New Zealand officer on active service.

VE had not been more than half an hour in r billets at the Masseria San Cataldo when the ys had begun to refer to "the peons" and he hacienda." The farmhouse is in fact ther like the Mexican manors one sees on the ms: a big flat-roofed building with square wers at the ends. It has a wide arcaded porch the ground floor and an open terrace above

The living quarters are all on the upper oor. The rooms to the right of the terrace e the master's quarters, uninhabitated since his st visit four years ago. We found them arsely furnished; the silver, the linen and the lk of the other furniture, all of it first-class uff, were locked away in a room to which the nministratore held the key. Bathroom and vatory were up-to-date and clean. The electic light was working. Behind the terrace is a t of rooms, about eight of them, where the ttore had been living till we evicted him, and the left of it are two long store-rooms filled ith wheat, carrots, and shrivelling tomatoes. own below, the right-hand rooms are offices; the left are store-rooms with oil-presses and ore heaps of grain; between the two wings is e chapel, complete with pink and blue statues the Madonna and the Sacred Heart. A prosrous and godly house.

At each end of the farmhouse and separated om it by an unpaved yard fifty feet wide, is row of three or four low cottages. The yard sually has several young, half-naked children aying about, and through a cottage door one ccasionally catches a glimpse of a drably essed woman washing clothes or sweeping. these cottages live the people who do the utine work of the farm. It happened that the st of the workmen to whom I spoke was the reman, the *guardino*. Although I saw him ery day for a month I never learned his surame. I called him Giovanni, at his request; e Italians called him Giuàn. A tall, straight an of sixty, with his hat always square upon is head and dressed in cottony near-tweeds ith collar and tie. Giovanni had fought in the st war at Caporetto and in the Balkans and d been some time with the occupation troops Bulgaria. So he knew his Army ranks and lways hailed me with a "buon giorne, Signor apitano," raising his hat six inches above his ead. We became good friends. I was able to elp him in certain small troubles of his, prenting the troops from trampling the vegetables, llowing him to keep the keys of the store-rooms r which he was responsible, and such like. In turn he gave me the use of odd items of furnire from the store-rooms and was generally coperative.

It was from Giovanni that I got my first idea the set-up on the farm. I supplemented what e told me by conversations with other workien, with the *fattore* and with a neighbouring ndowner, a retired general who had been driven fear of bombing to leave his town house and side for the time being on his land. The Masria San Cataldo, I learned, is one of ten farms, ven in Apulia and three in Campania, the prorty of the Marquis de Arruaga, a nobleman who s kept with his Spanish name the coat-ofms of his Spanish family, with the addition of ur ravens to indicate the centuries that have ssed since the founder of the younger branch nded in Italy with Gonsalvo de Cordoba. The arquis is all but unknown to his peasants. hen I asked one of them if the Master lived the Masseria he laughed; "The Marchese ever comes here. He is an Englishman." nother contradicted him: "No, he is a Piedontese and lives in Rome." It was the exneral who told me something about the rruaga family. The present Marquis normally es in Rome or in Paris, though the war has induced him to take up temporary quarters in the provincial discomfort of Zurich. When the war is over and things in Italy have settled down "under some reasonable form of government," then the Marquis will return to his Roman palazzo.

But the comings and goings of the Marquis do not affect the lives of his peasants. The farm is administered under a hierarchy of which the pinnacle is outside the peon's range of view. Of the nine families living in the cottages beside the farmhouse, Giovanni is the chief man. He receives the same pay as the rest (at present 600 lire—thirty shillings— a month), but while their monthly subsistence allowance is 25 kilos of grain and 1 litre of oil, Giovanni receives 8 kilos more grain as well as a daily litre of wine. For this wage he supervises the day-to-day work on the whole farm. He is answerable to the *fattore*, a dark, thick-set man with waxed moustache and natty borsalino who takes decisions on higher policy: the quantity of fertiliser necessary, the number of extra hands for the olive harvest, the price at which the calves will be sold. The *fattore* is a self-important little man. He was servile enough to me when we were alone, but in the presence of the workmen he would try rather feebly to assert himself. Very much the middleman is the *fattore*. He never does a hand's turn of manual work; his manner towards the peasants is arrogant; and his salary of about £300 a year permits him the luxury of a Fiat Balilla for which he used to cadge petrol from us. Apart from the Masseria San Cataldo the *fattore* manages two other of the Arruaga farms in the district. Above him is the *amministratore*, who handles the finances of all seven Apulian farms belonging to the Arruagas and who acts as steward generally to the absentee Marquis. The *amministratore* lives in Taranto, and though I never met him I gathered, from what the *fattore* told me, that he would be in the thousand-a-year class.

From data given me by Giovanni and the *fattore* I have tried to work out the income which this farm represents. I have calculated on the basis of pre-war prices and have translated lire into pounds at the pre-war rate (roughly, 100 lire = one pound sterling).

The ten Arruaga farms total something like 4,500 acres, of which the Masseria San Cataldo accounts for 940. It is given over to olive production and carries 12,000 trees. The olive is cropped every two years and a good tree will yield eight to ten hundredweights of fruit worth, in normal times, 100 lire (say, one pound sterling) per hundredweight. I calculated that, if an average tree produced four hundredweights per harvest this would give an annual production of 24,000 cwt. of olives for the whole farm, which represents a gross income of £24,000. What of production costs? First, labour. The nine workmen with their 600 lire per month (actually, they will have received less before the war), represent a charge of 65,000 lire or £650 per year. Then there are the olive pickers. In a normal year about 150 girls are employed for 100 days at 10 lire per day. Total: £1,500. With the salaries of *fattore* and *amministratore*, even reckoning these as a charge upon this single farm and not distributed over the several farms with which they are concerned, the annual wages bill would not be more than £3,500 to £4,000 in all. I found it harder to get information on cost of fertilisers and wear-and-tear on equipment and farm installations, but I reckoned they would not come to more than a couple of thousand pounds a year. I should say the Marquis would be unlucky if he did not clear £15,000 a year from this one farm. I should put the correct figure at nearer £20,000.

The Masseria produces other things than olives. It grows enough grain to feed the labourers and the farm animals. There are about twenty cows which are kept mainly for manure, but which also produce a certain quantity of milk for the Taranto market. There is a large kitchen garden and an orchard.

The peasants who work the farm are all miserably poor and all, except Giovanni, illiterate. I don't know if before we came they were discontented with their share in the stuff they produced, but they certainly began to criticise the set-up after they had had some contact with our New Zealanders. I remember a conversation with a group of them in the barn one wet afternoon. "Is it true, Signor Capitano, that in your country there are no landlords?" "Quite true," I said, not quite accurately. They glanced at one another and nodded. "And everything the ground produces belongs to the peasants?" "Yes, everything," I said, smiling to hear the word "peasants" applied to our New Zealand farmers with their mechanical equipment and their motor-cars. "That's how it should be," one of them said. "But how does it come about that you have no landlords?" It would have taken too long to talk of our early settlements and the schemes of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, so in desperation I replied, "Oh, we shot them all." "Shot them?" They nodded again. "Well, that was well done. That's what they ought to do in Italy, too." "They" ought to, not "we" ought to.

It would be quite incorrect to credit these peasants with revolutionary ideas or even with political intentions. Russia is for them an infinitely remote land, still somewhat sinister. Their ideal appears to be what politicians are fond of calling "the Anglo-Saxon way of life," that is reasonable material prosperity plus greater personal freedom than most Italians have ever known. Of this life they have learned something from their friends who have worked in America, something from their contacts with us, and I am sure that this would be their first choice. When they discover that there is no chance of their attaining this, then it may be that they will go the revolutionary way. But not yet. On that same afternoon one of the men, who had just come back from Taranto, reported that he had been at a public meeting where the speakers had called for the establishment of the Republic. This news puzzled the peasants and they called on me to explain. I did so: "They think the King is no good and they want to get rid of him." The man who had most approved the idea of shooting the landlords said, "But, Signor Capitano, how can we live without our King? Without a king how can there be an Italy?"

The mentality of these people, like their way of life, is mediæval. Typical is the faith they place in an ancient book of prophecies which seems to form part of the local folk-lore. Nobody I met had ever seen the book which, they say, was compiled by a wise man centuries ago, but they all quote from it and, I suspect, father upon it *post eventum* prophecies of their own. Apart from the usual predictions of wars and of aviation ("men shall fly and steel shall be lighter than feathers"), the book, it would appear, foretold the fall of Mussolini and the triumph of England and her Allies. The post-war, unfortunately, is not so clearly outlined.

To people who think like this, words like liberalism or communism and names like Sforza or Ercoli can mean nothing at all. The task of harnessing their discontent to any political bandwaggon will require far deeper subtlety and understanding than most people in England (to judge from the occasional English periodicals one sees out here) seem to imagine.

When the time came for us to leave the Masseria the peasants were, I think, really sorry to see us go. Giovanni invited another officer and me to drink wine with him in his cottage the evening before we went. The wine was harsh and I felt remorseful to be eating the bread and olives which Giovanni's wife set before us—bread is not plentiful in Italy to-day. But they would not hear of refusal. We drank until we were fairly merry and Giovanni sang songs in thick dialect. At the parting his words were: "Goodbye. World and world never meet, but men—men do sometimes meet again."

TWO BERNARD PLAYS

"The Sulky Fire," at the Arts
"Madeleine," at the Lyric, Hammersmith

Two plays by Jean Jacques Bernard catch the eye among the advertisements in which *Peek-a-Boo* and *The Quaker Girl* seem more at home. One of them has been to London already, the other is new. Should we go to a Bernard play? It will offer a very particular flavour, it will be intelligent and highly-strung, and probably we shall leave the theatre distrusting what we have seen. It has happened to me before, so I go remembering earlier encounters. There is not a great deal of difference between one Bernard play and another. Three or four characters will contain the action (this is a chamber-music of the theatre), and of these, two will be the husband and the young wife. Forget the husband, who is usually cold or busy or taking things too much for granted; he is unlikely to be sympathetic, either to us or to the author. The marriage barometer will be tapped insistently by the woman. Rising or falling? As she goes about the housework, as she talks with a confidante, as she dreams of possible lovers and a new life, tap-tap goes the finger on the glass. He doesn't guess . . . this existence is stifling . . . South America . . . the stranger on the platform . . . the man climbing a ladder below the window . . . With each tap the arrow approaches "Stormy." Every flicker, every slip from security is, emotionally, justified; because the woman dramatises subtly her hopes and disappointments, while the husband padlocks his. On the stage the better dramatiser wins; naturally, since she (it is usually she) speaks with the reason and passion of the dramatist.

So far, Bernard doesn't let us down. Life should contain more poetry; marriage should be of true minds; women have more aptitude for emotional success or failure. The fatal moments of indifference or impatience are indicated always with a subtlety that suggests the novel rather than the play. A first or a second act by Bernard is a duet from a novel in which a great deal that has gone before is conveyed by glances, changes of tone, uneasy insistence. The woman who in the opening scene was reading Chenier now turns to Baudelaire, without a word goes off to church; a multiplicity of such details, beautifully unstressed and linked together, gives the playgoer a sense of intimacy, of seeing into the recesses of moods, that is rare indeed in the theatre. How subtle, how exact, and how well written (for the movement of the dialogue has style, too)! That is the kind of purr that goes up, or should go up, in the foyer between the acts. Then, after a lapse of time, another act—as though in this well-articulated novel we had turned a hundred pages—and again everything is subtle, quietly tense and advancing towards a climax. Then it is that the method of this dramatist begins to waver; we get the climax, usually in the last minute before the curtain falls, and all the careful preparation for the stroke of violence seems lost. The woman may suddenly decide to throw up her marriage and go off to America, to kill herself, to fling herself into the arms of a chauffeur, to stay where she is and go on as before: whichever it is (and Bernard has tried all the endings from time to time), the solution always seems wrong for the particular play it is attached to; it's tacked on, it doesn't end, and the chapter that would have to take the consequences is left unwritten.

Now, if M. Bernard were the novelist he so nearly is he simply couldn't go on letting off these last minute rockets. There are novelists who have the same tendency to psychological penetration and medodrama; Miss Compton Burnett is a notable example. The melodramatic strokes in her novels are peculiar, to say the least of it, but they come and go, they aren't final in narrative as they would be on the stage. Their unreality matches an undercurrent of solemn joking which is one of the lures especially attractive to Miss Compton Burnett's admirers. Bernard has no printed page on which to work out eccentricities; his unreality—the last impression with which we leave his plays—is at odds and unresolved. So subtlely right most of the way—so wrong, so shockingly and irretrievably wrong when it comes to the point! We just don't accept his theatrical flourish, and disbelief seeps back in our memory of a whole evening. Blanche's decision at the Arts Theatre to stick by her war-shattered Othello—no decision at all! Madeleine in the fuse-mender's arms at the Lyric—ridiculous! One may see the sort of effect Bernard is aiming at—that of Strindberg's *Miss Julie*; but Strindberg brings it off and Bernard doesn't. His best form, I feel, would be the one-acter; but then, of course, we should lose the gradual mounting of crisis over months and years.

Among Bernard's qualities must be placed the opportunities he gives for fine acting. Miss Pamela Brown brings to the part of the neurotic Madeleine a remarkable ambivalence of hatred, tenderness, caprice, weakness and force. In *The Sulky Fire*, Blanche is haunted by a ghostly jealousy, and Miss Nancy Hornsby suffers persuasively. Of the two plays, *The Sulky Fire* carries more inevitability (Bernard's weak point), *Madeleine* is more complex and better acted. My favourite Bernard play is still one I've never seen, *The Unquiet Spirit*. There, it seems to me, unreality and psychological penetration blend effectively. It may be, of course, only the illusion of reading. Good and rare theatre, bad drama—that is what I can't help feeling after seeing a Bernard play.

G. W. STONIER

THE MOVIES

Scientific Film at the Torch Theatre

Experiments in the Revival from Death of Organisms is the startling and euphonious title of a film to be seen at the Torch Theatre. These experiments on dogs, made during the last six or seven years in U.S.S.R. by Professor Bryukhonenko, concern the death, revival and subsequent health of the animal, and are of immense importance in the treatment of human beings. (Similar experiments and films, I am told, have also been made in America.) The conclusion is that death, taken in time, can be surgically treated. First we are shown the severed head of a dog, to which an instrument called the autojector, supplying the functions of heart and lungs, has been attached. The head responds to stimuli; light makes the eyes open and blink. Then we are shown the application of the instrument to a whole organism. A dog, anæsthetised, is drained of its blood; the heart beat and the breathing stop; the dog is dead. Ten minutes later the autojector is attached and new blood is pumped into an artery until heart and lungs begin their own movements. The dog quickly recovers, and after a few days has regained its normal health. Dogs operated upon in this manner as far back as 1938 and after a death-interval of as much as 15 minutes are shown to have recovered completely. This film, by the way, with diagrams illustrating the physical processes and a straightforward commentary by Professor Haldane, can be an ordeal only for the spectator who does not realise the implications of what he is seeing. I hope that the Torch Theatre will discover other films as exciting as this one.

Sacha Guitry's *The Cheat* returns in the same programme. Photography was never its chief appeal, and it matters little that most of the film has about as much attraction for the eye as an old newsreel. Guitry's egotism, malice and gaiety survive. There have been few funnier moments in the cinema than the family of eleven stricken down by mushrooms, the theft in the hotel bedroom, the impersonations coming through the revolving doors. Guitry—whatever one may think of him to-day—had a genius for improvisation and is the only wit of our time who has impressed himself on celluloid.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE SWAN

So slowly the swan comes forward, in advance
Bearing its bellying tray of effusive plumes,
Yet backward draws its head and huffs its
  glance
As if it fended off its offering that presumes;
Swollen with slowness, and understowed by
  longing,
It grows on the water, close, thundery, and
  thronging,
Till suddenly beside me, without fuss,
Immense it blossoms like a cumulus.

W. R. RODGERS

Correspondence

DUSTY RETORT

SIR,—I missed "Dusty Retort" by B. L. Coomb but have read with interest Tom Hanlin in yo correspondence page this week on the same subjec

I am a social welfare worker and have eve sympathy with the miner. In the course of my wo I have visited miners' homes and have seen their wa dockets with the printed list of deductions down o side and pencilled in amounts in the £ s. d. colum I don't know whether miners pay in all pits for p baths, but they certainly do in some; one week' deduction for pit baths I saw was 1*s*. 6*d*., but the thi I find it difficult to understand is the heavy amou deducted for the use of explosives. On one pay for I saw 9*s*. 8*d*. was deducted for the use of explosive and the total wage came to under £4 when all deductions were off—the man was not a fully trained mine I was so interested in this heavy charge that I wen to the Reference Library and looked up the la about Explosives in the "Complete Statutes o England," and found that in the Act of 1911, Sec. 6 it clearly states that the pit owner must not make profit on the price charged, *if any*, to the mine for the use of explosives.

Recently I saw a short report in our local pape given by the Americans who came over here to se our coal mining methods. They found that ou methods were obsolete, and offered to send us th machinery for bringing our methods up to date, bu I wonder if such offers are accepted. The industr should be nationalised.

I am an ordinary person with a scrappy educatio perhaps my reasoning powers are at fault, but whe one sees so much poverty and utter hopelessne among poor people you can't believe that the syste as at present is the best possible solution.

34 Harley Road,
  Eccleshall, Sheffield, 11.

J. A. STAGG (Mrs.)

SIR,—I am sorry that the replies to "Dusty Retort have marred the frankness of your letter pages. Ha they been miners writing, instead of officials, I coul have understood their need to conceal their name "Colliery Official" expounds a new brand o patriotism in which the workers ask nothing for ext work and risks, yet which allows the colliery owne to take all the gains from that extra effort . . . or ca it be that he was dreaming of a future (and confuse it with the present) in which we would really be workin for the good of the country as a whole and not for th enrichment of a few?

I ask him not to insult the intelligence of you readers by suggesting that over-officials are takin home less pay than the men paid at labouring rate i the mines. I would like his explanation of how to fi piece rates on a fall which is continuing to crash dow whilst the men are working near it; or for checking "squeeze" whilst that pressure is still active. Ver often, piece rates are an attempt to make men wor more hurriedly on a dangerous job. Will he conside how many accidents have been caused through thi method—and how many piecework rates have bee lowered when officials have found that a good wag could be earned on those rates?

If "Colliery Official" does really need more information perhaps he will again refer to my origin article, and then read the letter from "Collie Manager," which is a reasoned reply and in man ways supports my argument.

I am grateful for the compliment from "Collie Manager" that I can make a "highly coloured article from such a drab setting as a colliery to Thank you. All through my writing I have bee warned that the public do not like figures so I avoide them. "Manager" has supplied them. They a fair and correct, and I am again grateful. Read wi the article, they support every statement. "Manager admits the grievance, shows the loss it caused, an says it has been at last removed. Exactly, that was th aim of the article. (Of course, he would not kn that some weeks of delay occurred after the artic was written up before it was printed.) I did no ask for any "wangling"; just that the extra I kn had been paid to the other men should be given to me for doing the same job.

As " Manager " appears to be a fair-minded official, I would like to take his S. Wales figures and put before him a position which happens scores of times every week throughout the coalfield. He gave the £5 weekly wage, but did not mention that the bonus shift was included in that. Supposing that one of the workers on the night or the afternoon shift fails to get to work on one shift. He may be suddenly ill, his wife may be dying, his child rushed to hospital or if travelling some distance he may miss the conveyance. What then will his pay for the week be? For that one lost shift the company will deduct one-third of his total pay . . . thirty-three shillings and fourpence for one lost shift . . . and he will receive for four shifts exactly twice that amount. Three pounds six and eightpence. Would " Manager " please tell us whether he considers that treatment humane?

B. L. Coombes

HUMAN REHABILITATION

Sir,—The following is an extract from a letter from a friend, a Sergeant in the R.A.M.C. in Burma:

" Physically I have never been fitter. Mentally, it is another matter. I am unable to concentrate, can only read the lightest of books, have difficulty in listening to music. Brain like a dandelion seed in a gale. Everybody is the same. No doubt ordinary civilised conditions will put the matter to rights. I doubt if this will happen before the war is over—then the world will have millions of feathery-minded men and women on its hands, unsettled and restless. Are they going to dump them on the civilian market without any preparation, many of whom have never had civilian jobs? It is evident to me, dull as my wits are, that soldiers need to be trained for peace just as civilians have to be trained for war. Does it sound too incongruous to have courses on civilian life, government, finance, economics? Certainly it will be necessary to train people in jobs, but is that sufficient? In any case I think that no officer or man should be discharged from the army without at least six months' mental training, carried out as unregimentally as possible.

Is consideration being given to the fact that the disciplined soldier, like the disciplined schoolboy when he goes to college, is going to run wild when the restrictions are suddenly dropped and he finds himself comparatively free? In justice to himself he should be let down gently. This, apart from the fact that the world will need co-ordination, stability and industry at the end of the war, far more than at any other time. In order to avoid discontent, it will be necessary to launch a firm propaganda to convince people that they cannot all be discharged from the army at once. This propaganda will have to be enlarged to cover the points I have made. I think some signs should already be evident of an attempt to prepare us for what is otherwise going to be the great let-down."

What do your readers think of this, and what is my answer to him to be? Michael D. Holloway

44, Castle Road,
Salisbury, Wilts.

UNRRA FOR INDIA

Sir,—Perhaps you will allow me to put on record what amounts to an assurance from the High Commissioner for India regarding UNRRA aid. In a letter dated June 28th, he says, " I have every reason to believe that, in view of the support which the House of Representatives in the U.S.A. has given to the proposal, India will be included in the scope of UNRRA." This is particularly welcome because, contrary to general belief, the food situation in India is no better to-day than it was six months ago. Twenty-seven prominent economists and industrialists, the " Bombay " planners among them, who are in direct touch with conditions in India, have renewed the warning that the threat of a second famine cannot be totally overruled. They recall that the recommendation of the Government's Food Policy Committee to establish a central grains reserve built up with imports from abroad is now nine months old, " but there is no indication yet of an adequate import programme."

Large-scale imports into India cannot, of course, take place, for UNRRA has the first claim on available supplies and shipping. Under the terms of the " Wheat Agreement " of 1942, UNRRA already has the right to call for 100,000,000 bushels of wheat, and is trying to acquire more. The India Government cannot hope to compete with an organisation which is backed by forty-four nations. If, as Mr. Richard Law said in the House of Commons on January 25th, that UNRRA is " to hold the balance," then India's needs must be taken into account.

Yet on June 22nd Mr. Amery in the House of Commons refused to give any assurance that the British representative would not " obstruct in any way the inclusion of India " within the scope of UNRRA. This " apathy on the part of Whitehall," which the industrialists say has been mainly responsible for India's continuing food crisis, is still our chief difficulty. Mr. Amery's statement is, moreover, somewhat inconsistent with the High Commissioner's assurance.

D. M. Sen

Trinity College, Cambridge.

CIVILIANS AND THE BATTLEFRONT

Sir,—If there is one thing that infuriates me it is the statement that we civilians of Southern England should be glad to share the dangers of our " sons in Normandy." Perhaps to a (presumably) middle-aged man with no young dependants and a guilty conscience this is so, but it makes no sense to a mother with one or more very young children. Do the soldiers in Normandy have to grab the baby and toddler while running to their slit trenches? Do they, after a sleepless night quieting screaming children, have to collect the new ration books, do the shopping and the cooking, housework, etc., without end. In other words, do they have to try to carry on a normal life on a battlefield? Of course not. They can concentrate on the fight. And I know which is the easier task. For goodness' sake, let us stop this fawning to male heroism. Civilians are every bit as brave and I regard any woman who has had two or more children voluntarily as equal to the most heroic V.C. that ever lived. Also she has something to show for her bravery.

K. Spooner (Mrs.)

[Our correspondent seems to have overlooked the fact that the evacuation of children and of all who had not essential work to do, was given as the first essential.—Ed. *N.S. & N.*]

RUSSIAN WRITERS

Sir,—This school is interested in learning the whereabouts of any letters written during the nineteenth century by Russian men of letters to the following people in the United Kingdom: Scott, Dickens, Matthew Arnold, William Ralston and Wilkie Collins. Any help in this search will be greatly appreciated. Information should be sent to the Director, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 15, Gordon Square, W.C.1.

William J. Rose,
Director

PROVIDENTIAL WEATHER

Sir,—I did not suggest that " if there is no Divine control, the universe must be a fortuitous chaos." I suggested (rightly or wrongly) that the view that the universe was fortuitous was implicit in what Critic had written.

I believe profoundly that the universe is a " cosmos " —that is to say, that it has " meaning " or " purpose " (this, I take it, is what people mean, essentially, when they say that they believe in God); though what that meaning or purpose is it is clearly beyond our power even to guess at. I believe that the view that

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JONATHAN CAPE

the universe is a sort of machine wound up to go on working quite independently of us (with us as only the spectators—or, as some might say, the victims—of it) is an utterly superficial one. The universe must be conceived as a unity, and in that case we ourselves are part of it; everything we do or think has some share in its working. (" Thou canst not pluck a flower without troubling a star.") And, although it would be absurd and childish to suppose that God (to use theological language) will answer our prayers always in accordance with our own desires, nevertheless it seems permissible (because not unreasonable) on looking back on some notable occasion when things turned out most fortunately for us—either as individuals or as a nation—to say with Henry V (if I may once more quote from Shakespeare) " O God, thy arm was there !'"

London, N.W.3. A. R. CRIPPS

STAGE-CENSORSHIP

SIR,—The recent production of Lajos Biro's banned play, *Patricia's Seven Houses,* at the Castle Theatre, Farnham, has prompted me to reflect on the censorship of plays in relation to this particular example.

Why was it banned ? For no other reason, so far as I can see, than that its action takes place in one of Patricia's houses, the houses being of that kind known, euphemistically, as " of ill-fame." But does the dramatist exploit this, suggestively and pruriently, cheaply and inartistically ? No. Does he aim to excite improperly ? No. He shows us something of incidental life in a brothel as unselfconsciously as though it were what Patricia first thinks it is, an hotel. Moreover, there is point behind this deliberate choice of background, indicated in the author's apologia: " There is a tendency in Britain," he says, " not to look facts in their ugly face . . . not to call a spade a spade and a great portion of the world a brothel." The play is, in fact, a political allegory, not a " sex-play " at all. " The English," said Biro, " deal with the world like a lovable spinster who inherited a dozen brothels "—and the whole melodramatic story of his play is symbolic of the clash between honest English democracy, on the one hand, and dishonest, unscrupulous totalitarianism, on the other. We are individually free to endorse Biro's attitude or to think it superficial and even naive, but the point at issue is his freedom to express it in our theatre. One would have thought, off-hand, that such a view, excitingly and forcefully expressed, might have been considered excellent propaganda for the times. It was evidently not on political grounds that the Lord Chamberlain considered it inadvisable for such of the general public as are not members of theatre-clubs, or friends of members, to see the play. And so we are forced back on to the " moral " issue. Is there any justification for the practice of one man, or a committee, deciding, arbitrarily, what is and what is not " good " for us ? Theatres offer pruriency in plenty for those who relish it ; yet a fundamentally serious and sincere play, with a quietly matter-of-fact background, is thought likely to demoralise or offend, and so denied a hearing. Is it not time to abolish the whole business of stage-censorship ? Or, at least, should there not be some confidence that sensible decisions will be taken ? It seems to me that our dramatic critics, or some such body of acknowledged experts—men capable of discerning genuine artistic quality when it exists—should have a say in the matter. We might not then be faced with such ludicrous anomalies as exist and will no doubt continue to exist so long as the present manifestly inadequate system operates.

W. H. GELDER

INTERROGATIVE

SIR,—Permit me to remind your readers that a Parliamentary remark reported by Pontifex Minor and not by Hansard is evidence only to those who can judge Pontifex Minor's character and qualities as easily as he judges other people's. To the best of my recollection, I did not say " They are not fighting for you," but only " For *you ?* " with a highly interrogative inflection. The question was fairly widely asked, and not first by me, though *I* think I should have asked it if no one else had.

If there's space (and I think there ought to be) I would add this: For more than five years all the people who used to say war must not be an instrument of policy have been trying to persuade the public that this war will be wasted unless it secures all the policies they have always wanted, and all the objects of policy. Since no one doubts the evil of unemployment, it would not be surprising if after all this indoctrination many soldiers did make the solicited response by assuming that the purpose and the promised reward of the war should be complete and permanent abolition of unemployment. To combine such material war-aiming with warfare for a Leader (even a Trade Union Leader) might be dangerously Fascist.

Corpus Christi College, K. H. PICKTHORN
Cambridge.

CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISE

SIR,—It is obvious that Mr. Will Rowe does not understand the fundamental principles of the Co-operative Movement. It is scarcely in keeping with the abolition of the profit motive to pay high salaries to a small number of employees. The people who have made the greatest contribution to the development of the Co-operative Movement are those who have been activated by ideals rather than high salaries. However, salaries of £1,000 are not uncommon in the Co-operative Movement, and this compares favourably with the salaries paid to officials of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions. I am at a loss to understand Mr. Rowe's motive for picking on the Co-operative Movement. The final paragraph of his letter is amazing. He suggests a " Brains Trust " consisting of Socialists, Trade Unionists and Co-operators to advise the Co-operative Movement how to run its business. Presumably the Labour Party and Trade Unions have all the brains and are so efficient that they do not need any outside assistance.

Brother ! There is something in thine own eye.

18 Kimberley Road, N.17. W. J. IRVING

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

SIR,—I offer my belated but sincere congratulations on your excellent comments on Savings Weeks.

It seems to me that the letter by Jill Waterhouse—a group secretary—gives a perfect example of our nation's muddled thought. She goes to great length to show that savings are actually used, if only indirectly, then she goes on to tell us that secretaries work for nothing but the gratitude of those who " now have little nest eggs."

How money can be saved by the individual, even though it is spent by the nation is never explained. Surely this is the crux of the matter.

Let us stop hedging and face up to this farce as another example of our unworkable capitalist economy. If we can do this in no other way, we can do it by demanding absolute truth—morally and economically. You cannot save what is spent and destroyed in war.

Glanrafan, Llangollen. J. KENNETH LAWTON

GO FOR A BURTON

SIR,—The origin of " To Go For a Burton " was as follows: Years ago when the R.A.F. had just started, at one of the very first R.A.F. stations to be opened (in the Midlands) there was a great to-do about the supply of beer. The troops wanted Burton's beer, but for some reason or other it could not be obtained. Thus the hardened drinkers would always go to a nearby pub for a drink, where they would get Burton's. As these men sometimes came back to camp more or less drunk, the phrase " He's gone for a Burton " gradually became identified with a state of incapacity and so on to death.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

The War of the Spanish Succession is one of the unnecessary wars of Europe, one that grows more tedious and meaningless as history recedes. But it produced a remarkable English general who annoyed his contemporaries by his brilliance, the Earl of Peterborough; and a minor classic of military narrative from one of the Earl's officers, an engineer called George Carleton. Dr. Johnson sat up all night reading this book. Sir Walter Scott wrote a preface for it. For many years the authorship was attributed to Defoe. It is a plain, mettlesome narrative with more than a touch of that reporter's surprising circumstantial detail; and is marked also by Defoe's gift of combining personal experience with what is generally known, in convincing proportion. A large number of war reports fail because the author's mind and manner will not sustain both a vivid personal story and the generalities of a campaign. The life is smoothed out of one or the other.

When Carleton's *Military Memoirs** were re-published some years ago, it was suggested that they were interesting to us because they showed a soldier's life at the beginning of modern warfare. Warfare has such a way of becoming unexpectedly ancient in its habits and, in our time, appears to be going through a medieval phase, that one hesitated over the suggestion. The use of heavy artillery, the growing need for the technician and the employment of local guerrillas as a fifth column in Spain—the traditional home of the fifth column—were seen in this Spanish War; but most remarkable of all to the contemporary reader, is the Earl of Peterborough's genius—for it was no less—for breaking the impregnable Maginot lines and Atlantic Walls of his time, and with very small armies. His originality and thoroughness in the field, his exhaustive intelligence, his personal pre-views of the enemy, his secretiveness, shocked the conventional and annoyed his political rulers. He was a friend of Alexander Pope, and later on in life he wrote to the poet:

> I am cured of some diseases in my old age which tormented me very much in my youth. I was possessed with violent and uneasy passions, such as a peevish concern for truth and a saucy love for my country.

And again:

> When I have been fool enough to take pains, I always met with some will more able to undo my labours.

The wrongs and disappointments of soldiers are the music of their old age; but the worst that can be said of the Earl is that he was tactless to politicians and unobliging about the speed of the Royal Navy who, in turn, accused him of military vanity and of never being where he ought to be.

The Earl's first Atlantic Wall was the city of Barcelona, and his capture of the city was the result of a curious combined operation. The city was thought by all, the Earl included, to be an impenetrable fortress; and it was manned by armies that very much outnumbered his own. Not only that, his own rulers and commanders on the spot were split by quarrels. The Earl, as Carleton puts it, "concluded the readiest way to surprise his enemies was to elude his friends." First of all, unknown to anyone, he inspected the scene of battle thoroughly himself. His promenade was not molested. From this he deduced that the garrison had grown lazy because they felt themselves secure. He added to their false sense of security by re-embarking his artillery and on the actual night of the attack the inhabitants were celebrating the supposed departure of their enemies. The Navy were told nothing and were very annoyed. On land the Prince of Hesse openly accused the Earl of cowardice; but the Earl, going his own gait, marched a number of his men round to Montjuich at night and rushed them over the outworks into this key position. The Navy's spirits were revived by this initial success and they re-landed the heavy artillery with enthusiasm and had columns of men, two hundred strong, hauling the cannon and mortars up the precipitous mountains where no horses could draw them, for the next stage of the battle.

Carleton's account of this is clear and animated. He is that delightful and extinct figure: the man of honour. He has skill in technical exposition; but he knows how to wash this down with philosophical reflection, epigram and observation of human character. The Earl was a man, he says, whose faculties are "set afloat" by difficulty and discouragement; and he made his sudden and private decision to carry out the attack because he was in a temper with the Prince of Hesse. The two men, who hadn't spoken to each other for a fortnight, rode into battle together, each determined to show the other he was not afraid. Alas, the Prince got his head knocked off. Another attraction of Carleton's narrative is his awareness of the luck of war. It was a stroke of luck that 200 of the Earl's men were taken prisoners because, kept in the dark by their commander, they spread their own alarming surmises at the interrogation—a piece of luck which tallied with the Earl's methods, for he liked to send out pairs of spies with a false story, one of whom would betray the other. Another stroke of luck occurred soon after the ramparts of Montjuich were taken. The attackers could not believe their daring had succeeded; and when their commander had been left for a while, they got in a panic and crept away from their own victory. For half an hour the place was empty, the enemy did not know and it was an accident that the Earl returned to the spot and got the men back. Carleton knows also how panic affects soldiers. At the beginning of his soldiering in the Netherlands he had been ambushed. The only escape was to scramble through a hedge and he saw the men rush blindly to the hedge and then begin fighting each other in attempts to get through at the same places. Carleton himself got over the hedge by jumping on to the shoulders of two men who were fighting. There is a good deal about the mysteries of fear and courage in this book and he notes how famous duellists are great cowards in battle. There was one he met in a naval action who ran away below, but begged the sailors to tie him to the mast so that he could show them he was not afraid of bullets. It was in this battle that a wounded officer, left in the sick bay unattended, was eaten alive by hogs which had got loose at the height of the action.

Carleton's account of the Earl's mercurial campaign in Catalonia is exciting. His action was always unexpected. He used the local guerrillas; he put the interests of his troops very high and he restrained them from molesting the always difficult Spanish population. These hordes of Protestant soldiers were quartered in a country where the Inquisition was active; and where scandalous stories about the habits of nuns gingered the soldiers' imagination. Carleton, a very honest writer, did not believe these stories and although he has the religious opinions of one who had once served the Prince of Orange, he is very careful to say that he saw little that was discreditable to the nuns. With the priests he got on very well and philosophically compares the life of the hermit with the life of the soldier. But he was pestered once by the Inquisition. This is an amusing episode, for the sinister agent worked to make Carleton admit he did not believe in purgatory. Carleton was as delighted as another Borrow, to admit, indeed to proclaim, his unbelief. The belief was ridiculous, he said, for Christ had said to the thief on the cross: To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.

Late in the campaign Carleton was taken prisoner at Denia and there he came across his opposite number on the enemy side, a French engineer, who had blown up 23 high ranking British officers with a mine. Who can resist his fate, asks Carleton. The officers had been obligingly warned by the enemy, the population went to a neighbouring hill to watch. Only one officer, General Richards, seems to have had a presentiment of evil. A servant told Carleton the tale and there is a Defoe-like touch in it which he did not miss. The servant said that:

> . . . the night preceding the unfortunate catastrophe of his master, he was waiting on him in the casement, where he observed, some time before the rest of the company took notice of it, that General Richards appeared very pensive and thoughtful; that the whole night long he was pestered with, and could not get rid of a great fly, which was perpetually buzzing about his ears and head, to the vexation and disturbance of the rest of the company, as well as the general himself; that in the morning, when they went upon the battery, under which the mine was, the general made many offers of going off; but Colonel Syburg, who was got a little merry, and the rest out of a bravado, would stay, and would not let the general stir; that at last it was proposed by Colonel Syburg to have the other two bottles to the queen's health, after which he promised they would all go off together.
>
> Upon this, my relator, Syburg's gentleman, said, he was sent to fetch the stipulated two bottles; returning with which, Captain Daniel Weaver, within thirty or forty yards of the battery, ran by him, vowing he was resolved to drink the queen's health with them; but his feet were scarce on the battery, when the mine was sprung, which took him away with the rest of the company; while Major Harding, now a justice in Westminster, coming that very moment off duty, exchanged fates.

That fly buzzes straight out of the *Plague Year* and *Captain Singleton*.

Carleton's curiosity about people is very agreeable. Like most European travellers in Spain he observed, in the eastern part, the disturbing contrasts between the wild festive richness of the country and the moroseness and gloom of Spanish society. He had one very striking conversation with a wealthy and merry anti-clerical gentleman in a village called San Clemente de la Mancha on the subject of Don Quixote:

> . . . Before the appearance in the world of that labour of Cervantes, it was next to an impossibility for a man to walk the streets with any delight or without danger. There were seen so many cavalieros prancing and curveting before the windows of their mistresses, that a stranger would have imagined the whole nation to have been nothing less than a race of knight-errants. But after the world became a little acquainted with that notable history, the man that was seen in that once celebrated drapery, was pointed at as a Don Quixote, and found himself the jest of high and low. And I verily believe, added he, that to this, and this only, we owe that dampness and poverty of spirit, which has run through all our councils for a century past, so little agreeable to those nobler actions of our famous ancestors.

I can think of no comparable change of manners being caused by a character in English fiction, unless one counts Childe Harold; and he can hardly have been said to have affected our national spirits. And I do not believe that Spanish apathy dates from Don Quixote. The argument is an early foreign example of the habit of blaming the intellectuals. One can imagine some misanthropic Englishman of the future turning our woes to a fear of resembling the figure of Colonel Blimp, to a general clipping of the walrus moustache and the abandoning of the Turkish bath.

V. S. Pritchett

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to grumble. We receive grumbles all the time from members of the Services at home and overseas who cannot get this paper. The Publisher has many addresses of Service members and civilians who would be glad to have your copy, as soon as you have finished with it.
10 GREAT TURNSTILE, LONDON, W.C.1

**Military Memoirs.* By George Carleton. Preface by Sir Walter Scott. Introduction by A. W. Lawrence. Travellers Library. *Cape.*

A PLAN FOR INDIA

A Plan of Economic Development for India. Penguin Special. *9d.*
India since Cripps. By Horace Alexander. Penguin Special. *9d.*
Strangers in India. By Penderel Moon. *Faber and Faber.* *7s. 6d.*

There is hopeful news at last from India: she has begun to plan. In politics the deadlock is as forbidding as ever. But what matters in India is her desperate poverty; politics are important chiefly because her standard of life cannot be raised without the creative planning of her governments, national and provincial. For several years committees set up by Congress have been busy in the intervals between successive imprisonments in working out the economic plan which an independent India shall realise. There were good economists in this team, but they may have lacked industrial experience. The novelty of the plan, which now appears as a "Penguin" book, is that the eight men who have drafted it are the leaders in the Indian world of industry and finance. Four of them are directors of the Tata firm, which stands head and shoulders above every other as a creative pioneer of Indian industry. In steel and hydro-electricity it has led the way—not to mention its less daring ventures. One of these four partners, Sir Ardeshir Dalal, who was formerly a distinguished civil servant, has recently become a member of the Viceroy's Council as its Minister for Planning. That was a startling appointment, for the tradition of *laisser faire* dies hard in India, and Lord Wavell is the first Viceroy since Lord Curzon who has shown any interest in economic planning. This, then, is a plan which calls for study. Behind it there is experience and achievement, and though it springs from Indian brains, it has won a notable success at New Delhi. On its merits it fully deserves the attention it has received; it is built on bold and ambitious lines, for it aims at doubling the national income of India in fifteen years. In its concern for the welfare of the masses it shows a notable humanity. Socialists will find some gaps in it, but they will gratefully accept its corroboration of much that they have been saying about India's needs. From Russia these planners have wisely learned several valuable lessons. There is not a word of criticism in it from beginning to end, but indirectly it is a terrific indictment of stewardship.

There is much in this blueprint with which any competent planners would have to start. A chief objective must be an immense and rapid expansion of Indian industries, more especially the basic industries—steel, machine-making, chemicals and hydro-electricity. In fact this scheme aims at a five-fold increase of industry in general, and proposes to pay more attention to consumers' goods than the Russians in a similar situation did. It fully realises that the backwardness of agriculture lies at the root of the whole problem of poverty: a colossal labour force is being wasted in the villages in uneconomic effort to a degree that the western imagination can barely conceive. It proposes, therefore, to double the agricultural yield.

But it is not in these conventional terms that the planners have approached their task. What they have set themselves to do, from first to last, is to raise the standard of life of Indian humanity, which is, after all, the chief capital resource the Peninsula possesses: the snow of the Himalayas which can be melted into electricity may come next. And so we start with the need for a balanced and adequate diet. We go on to clothing, housing, public health and education. To anyone familiar with India's poverty and the timid scale and crawling pace of her policies of reform, the proposal to set up a dispensary in every village with arrangements on the same scale for doctors, midwives, hospitals, both general and special, will seem as startling as they are welcome. Education is attacked in the same radical spirit. In short, the planners dare to dream of a healthy nation, which satisfies its hunger in a habitable home and can think to some purpose after it has eaten a square meal.

Space fails me to summarise what the planners propose to do to develop hydro-electricity, to build up heavy industries, expand consumers' industries and raise the yield of the fields. They do not shrink from suggesting some use of collective farming. They do not go into much detail, and little that they suggest is new; what is as novel as it is valuable is that they welded what may be familiar suggestions into a closely integrated whole, spaced out over fifteen years, with a daringly full estimate of the cost. They believe it can be met. India is no longer a debtor but a creditor State, which can buy its machinery abroad and hire specialists. She has stores of hoarded gold, which a national government could conjure out of the ground. On this basis, while the output of real goods is expanding, it would be legitimate to make use of what they bravely call "created money"—in other words bankers' credit based on securities.

My own reflections in reading this stimulating plan took the form of questions which trench on politics. In the effort to raise the peasants' standard of life, he must first be relieved from his load of debt, and then delivered from the other parasites who prey on him, notably the dealer and (in the North) the landlord. Then I want to tap certain resources of taxation: income tax is absurdly low, and the landed gentry escape it. Lastly, what can be done by wages boards, for instance, to raise the purchasing power of the workers, including the landless labourers? In short, the distribution of wealth is as crucial in any economic plan as its production. Finally, in addition to electricity and the railways, might we not socialise at least the extractive industries, coal and mineral ores?

Mr. Alexander's book is the fruit of a stay in Bengal, during which he organised the Friends' work to relieve the famine. On some aspects of this scourge he has much to tell us. He gives a clear account of the Cripps offer, but tells us disappointingly little about the campaign of civil disobedience. He vindicates Mr. Gandhi convincingly from the more malicious criticisms directed against him, but does not discuss the bigger question of the wisdom of his tactics. Charitable though the book is, it leaves some uncomfortable reflections in our minds, notably on the questions that revolve round *divide et impera.*

Mr. Moon's is a brilliant and readable little book on the theme that we are and always were "strangers" in India who have imposed our own culture and procedure too recklessly. He was a Civil Servant, and throughout the book he instructs and entertains us by reporting what happened in his own experience as a district magistrate. It is chiefly of our criminal procedure that he is critical. He might have extended this criticism to the strangers' land policy and system of education.

H. N. Brailsford

WILD BEASTS AND THEIR KEEPERS

Courts and Cabinets. By G. P. Gooch. *Longmans.* *12s. 6d.*

Dr. Gooch has collected into a book studies of thirteen memoir writers: Mme de Motteville, the Grande Mademoiselle, Burnet, Saint-Simon, the Margravine of Bayreuth, Lord Hervey, Horace Walpole, Mme d'Arblay, Mme Capron, Mme de Rémusat, Queen Hortense, Caulaincourt and Juliette Adam. These studies, he tells us, are designed in the first place for readers without time or inclination for the originals.

In a style neither tedious nor very distinguished Dr. Gooch sums up immense masses of material with uncommon skill. His erudition enables him to gauge by other sources the trustworthiness of the writers he is discussing. But in his judgments of character he is not always convincing, and to women in particular he seems to show an excessive and, as it were, cloistered indulgence. Thus he calls Marie Antoinette a "noble" woman. Courage she had and at the end dignity, nor must one forget how seductive were the temptations to frivolity of which she was the prey. But she was feather-headed, stubbornly self-indulgent and conceitedly deaf to all good advice; her duplicity, moreover, was largely responsible for her husband's death and her own. Queen Hortense, again, was endowed with great charm and has been too hardly treated by French biographers, but should not some mention be made of her incorrigible taste for striking fine attitudes and presenting herself as the most virtuous of victims? Fanny Burney was remarkably intelligent. But Dr. Gooch seems not to notice that she was remarkable also for slyness and that, when confronted with royalty, she refused to apply her intelligence. He seems even to accept her view that Queen Charlotte never made an enemy. In fact, the Queen was loathed, and with good reason, by her own daughters. With these reservations, Dr. Gooch's book can be strongly recommended to all who are interested in history, whether or not they have read the memoirs he discusses.

In his first study he quotes Mme de Motteville's comments on court life as she had known it in the Louvre of Anne of Austria:

> For no one is the air mild or serene. Those who seem entirely happy and are adored like gods are most menaced by the storm. The thunder never ceases. It is a windy region, dark and subject to continual tempests. Its inmates are chronic sufferers from the contagious malady, ambition, which deprives them of repose, ravages their hearts and affects their reason. This malady also generated a distaste for the best things. They are ignorant of the value of equity, justice and kindness. The sweetness of life, the innocent pleasures, everything which the sages of antiquity declared to be good, seem to them ridiculous. They are incapable of knowing virtue and obeying its maxims unless chance removes them from this sphere. Then, if they can cure themselves of this malady, they become wise and see the light. No one should be such a good Christian or philosopher as a courtier cured of his delusions.

This passage—I have ventured to change one word of the translation—might be the final moral of this cautionary book. Lewis XIV, James II, George II, Frederick William I, Frederick the Great, Napoleon—what a crew these sovereigns are! The French Bourbons were at least sane, but the Hohenzollerns and the Guelphs, like the Romanovs and the Spanish Bourbons, reveal repeatedly the stigmata of madness. How strange that monarchs, who have the inestimable advantage of being incessantly prayed for, should so frequently remain subnormal! Dr. Gooch points out that the Margravine of Bayreuth's memoirs do not deserve entire confidence, and I would add that she forfeits our sympathy by continuing to profess dutiful affection for her appalling parents. But when some allowance has been made for exaggeration, family life at Potsdam outdoes anything imagined by Zola or Céline. At Windsor the children in each generation of Hanoverians have excited the detestation of their parents (and we may be thankful that the present Monarch has married a lady instead of some German princess with a Yahoo heredity), but our Princes and Princesses, luckier than their cousins, have at any rate always been preserved by public opinion or by the mildness of the climate from starvation, imprisonment and instant danger of being murdered.

A subject that, even more than the beastliness or triviality of Kings and Queens, will engage Dr. Gooch's readers is the psychology of the courtiers who attend upon these inadequately domesticated animals. What sort of person could endure the daily humiliations, what motives entangle them in this perilous propinquity? Commonplace love of power is the most obvious explanation (Saint-Simon and Hervey—though Hervey was also genuinely fond of Caroline). Then there is that appetite for glamour which in such characters as Fanny Burney can survive the intimacy that would disillusion any ordinary being. Sometimes, too, a canine fidelity, that does not necessarily preclude clear sight and even plain speaking (Burnet and Caulaincourt). Strongest of all, probably, the lust for being "in the know," from indulging which men and women gain the self-importance they require. Mme de Motteville presents this in its prettiest light when she calls the spectacle of court life "une belle comédie," at which she assists with detached curiosity.

Incomparably the greatest memoirs of court life are Saint-Simon's, and Dr. Gooch skilfully selects passages reflecting the vindictive hatred that was the mainspring of his genius. By comparison Mme de Remusat is uninspired, but her memoirs fascinate by recording the gradual deterioration of Napoleon and the concurrent change in her judgment of his character. Again judiciously, Dr. Gooch champions the general truthfulness of her portrait against the accusations of the dictator's angry nephew. Carlyle, who, turning a Nelson eye to the criminal lunacy of Frederick William I called him "a dumb poet," Carlyle declared that history was the essence of innumerable biographies. And it is most interesting to see so eminent an historian as Dr. Gooch considering the materials from which this essence is extracted. I am certain, moreover, that many readers beside myself will be grateful for the bibliographical advice he gives at the end of each study. The purpose of his book, he explains, is rather to stimulate than to satisfy healthy appetites. And one good result of the enjoyable reading he recommends must be to reduce our pessimism. For most of the memoirs he discusses suggest that men have become not wickeder, but merely more open and more efficient in their wickedness.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE BESIEGED CITY

Leningrad. By ALEXANDER WERTH. *Hamilton.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The resistance of Leningrad is among the great stories of the war. Other European cities gave in—and against loss of honour one could balance the preservation of stone—or were destroyed. Future centuries (and ourselves in old age) may well be grateful that they escaped battle; but for the present it means more that Leningrad held. Leningrad proved two things: that a great city is something more than a work of art, and that total resistance can defeat totalitarian attack. It is a story we have had to piece together, hazily, calculatingly, from newspaper reports and films. Mr. Werth gives it to us in terms of humanity.

He spent five days in Leningrad in September, 1943. Little enough time even for so sensitively trained a journalist as Mr. Werth, but one feels, not that he has spun a book of 200 pages out of slapdash impressions, but that a vital experience has been trimmed down. Every minute counted, for Mr. Werth was returning after an absence of more than twenty-five years to the city of his birth. Here were the promenaders (despite shelling) of the Nevsky; here, in 1916, he had heard Scriabin's *Poème d'Extase* conducted by Koussevitsky; here was the sweet-shop where as a child he had been taken by an uncle; his own lodging was shuttered, with a note from a soldier or a workman to his girl saying he'd be back next week. In the twenty-five years of absence St. Petersburg had become Leningrad, and yet it bore all the old distinction: the famous sky-line, the sense of dignity and culture, the Europeanism of which every citizen, from librarian to tram conductor, was proudly aware. Cabbages and an A.A. gun in front of the Cathedral; but even through the worst cold the trees of the Summer Garden had been left untouched. Mr. Werth's impressions, as he walked and talked during his brief visit, came to him in a triple layer. What he recalled of the old capital was being reinforced now by signs of the Revolution and of the twenty-nine months' siege from which the streets were beginning to emerge. The aristocratic aloofness he remembered from childhood had been replaced by a new sense of separation, of symbolic struggle; while Russia was fighting a patriotic war, it had been reserved for Leningrad to battle for the Revolution. Mr. Werth speaks of the "revolutionary greatness" of the old capital. The feeling was the same in the front line, in workshops and offices. Women and children had been killed digging the trenches that held up the forty-five Nazi divisions. There had been the terrible famine of 1941–2, when civilians lived or died on 125 grams of bread a day. Shelling, of course, and bombing (less destructive than the London blitz). The city was still being shelled, but indiscriminately, for the Germans had long known that the real battle was lost. Many of the facts and incidents related to Mr. Werth, with no feeling of personal pride, are stoically revealing. I cull a few. At the Opera, the ballet-dancers on the stage wore fur coats. Steeplejacks were needed to put a covering over the gilt spire of the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul: the volunteers had first to be fed for several days. The air ace, Sevastianov, began a line of heroes by ramming Nazi bombers that came over the city (the effect on the enemy was deterrent). The Kirov works, under persistent shell fire, managed to *export* bayonets and hand-grenades at the height of the blockade. All through the winter, snow was used to put out incendiaries. Vera Inber's poem about the siege—a remarkable piece of work, according to Mr. Werth—sold 10,000 copies in two days . . . And so on. It is an epic tale that comes to us through the sensitive eyes and ears of Mr. Werth as he makes his tour of the besieged city.

He saw, in fact, a good deal, from the famous Kirov works on the southern sector to Kalmenny Island in the north. He was among his own people and they talked: quietly, remarkably. The material of the book was collected as part of a larger account of the war in Russia, but this episode, so crammed for Mr. Werth with particular emotions, segregated itself. *Leningrad* is written coolly, but from the heart. It is, for English readers, the best piece of reporting that has come out of Russia during the war.

G. W. STONIER

ECONOMIC STUDIES

Commodity Controls. By P. LAMARTINE YATES. *Cape.* 15*s.*

Mr. Yates and his collaborators have made a useful contribution to thought on a subject which, as yet, has by no means received its due and necessary share. Their approach has been to study the economic history and prospects of a variety of major commodities from wheat to oil and to use these studies as the background for a more generalised consideration of the problem. On this basis recommendations are made as to future policy. The individual studies are excellently done; they will be appreciated by economists and others both for reference and as yielding a clear indication of the very varied issues involved. They show a remarkable contrast in the rates of increase of output: wheat approximately doubled in the last fifty years, oil by some thirty-fold.

These disparities do not result simply from the degree of improvement of the technique of production, but from differences in demand. Material progress does not proceed by the equal multiplication of all goods. On the contrary, as the nutrition experts continually emphasise, we may be getting enough calories long before we have adequate proteins, vitamins and all the rest. Thus, for example, as the standard of living rises there will be little or no increase in the world demand for wheat. This conclusion is not vitiated by pointing

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to the scope for increased cereal consumption in the Far East, unless international charity on a mass scale can be hoped for. As Mr. Yates points out, if the standard of living in those countries rises it will be largely owing to improvements in agricultural methods which will enable them to continue to feed their own populations at the improved level. On the other hand technical progress will increase the output of wheat from existing farms, and so there will be a relative over-production of wheat. Unless something is done about it, prices will fall until some of the producers are driven out by bankruptcy or by finding a more useful activity, whether animal husbandry or industrial employment—which may take a long time, and indeed may be a continuous process. Such endemic depression Mr. Yates finds to be characteristic of several commodities. These happen to be produced by relatively poor classes of persons: such pressure on prices still further lowers their standards, thus increasing inequality among groups of producers and nations—a generally undesirable outcome.

Mr. Yates, who is no restrictionist and no lover of cartels, finds in these circumstances a justification for the use of restrictive techniques in some—not all—commodity controls. And here, of course, the difficulty arises. For the only advantage of burning coffee is to raise its price and the incomes of the relatively poor Brazilian, Abyssinian or other producers, at the expense of the consumers; if the means could be found for the consumers to subsidise the producers in some other way, they could then have the extra coffee in effect free. The same applies to any form of restriction which does not turn the producer to doing something else. It is an objection which Mr. Yates does not really face. It is not very easy to get round it, though suggestions have been made—as, for example, that controls should levy a tax to be used to help the poorer countries to develop alternative crops or industries.

The means proposed for restricting production is the export quota, which leaves it to each State to develop alternative production, or not, from its own financial resources. The other main objection to this method is fully appreciated—that it tends to "freeze" production in existing sources, and in particular protects high-cost producers at the expense of their low-cost competitors and the consumer. Some proposals are made to meet this, chiefly the adequate representation of consumer states and interests on the "board" of the control. Also a scheme for the quotas to be allocated by some sort of periodical auction, the lowest bidders to receive the largest quotas; it would have been worth developing the possibilities and consequences of this in considerably greater detail.

Quite apart from restriction, the main recommendation is that control should maintain "buffer-stocks" as a protection against the extraordinarily wide price variations which have taken place from year to year. These would cushion the effect of harvest changes—the "ever-normal granary" developed by President Roosevelt—and those of cyclical or other swings in demand, which occur mainly in the case of industrial raw materials. Such a proposal fits in with modern ideas on the maintenance of steady employment and would also assist the stability of the national currencies of the states concerned as producers.

Mr. Yates suggests some international "General Commodities Council" to supervise and assist the individual controls; but its proposed functions, powers and methods are extremely sketchy. Admittedly, anything fuller might have been dismissed as "theoretical," and Mr. Yates may well feel that he was bound to be shot at whatever he did. On the other hand, any constructive proposals not wildly out of line with political possibilities would serve both to stimulate the thought of experts, who are all too preoccupied with immediate issues, and develop public opinion. These seem to be the functions of a book such as this; and if so, it is a pity to err on the side of the unimaginative and the practical.

EDWARD CHARTER

SHORTER NOTICE

Rendezvous with Rommel. By RICHARD MCMILLAN. *Jarrolds.* 10s. 6d.

Birth of an Army. By A. P. AUSTIN. *Gollancz.* 9s. 6d.

Front Line and Front Page. By DAVID WOODWARD. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 10s. 6d.

Here are three more books by correspondents from the Mediterranean, or rather two scrap books and one book. For whereas Woodward and McMillan have hurriedly thrown together their recollections, Austin has written a serious book. *Birth of an Army* makes one realise the loss British journalism suffered by his death.

Looking back on his life with the First Army from December 1942 until May 1943, Austin perceived one continuous thread of development—the transformation of British and American troops without battle experience into an army which achieved the unconditional surrender of some of Germany's be divisions. Austin shows how this was achieved by a series of intimate studies of soldiers in the front line. Everything he writes is based on first-hand knowledge; he detests the war correspondents typing away on their typewriters in Algiers. The result is an intensely readable book which should be of value to the historian.

Neither McMillan nor Woodward have Austin's power to recollect their experiences in tranquillity. Trying to write the story of the 8th Army, McMillan is constantly distracted by the lure of the "good story." His narrative is jumbled and confused, and much of his information is doubtful. He is apparently unaware, for instance, that Rommel did not plan the German defence at El Alamein, and was not even present in the first stages of the battle. The book, however, contains one or two useful descriptions, for instance of Tobruk.

Woodward has been wisely less ambitious, and has been content to throw together a miscellany of impressions. His descriptions of the Greek Army's offensive against the Italians and of the naval war in the Mediterranean are excellent. Even when his stories are stale his pleasant shaggy personality makes *Front Line and Front Page* readable.

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SPAIN: THE MORAL TOUCHSTONE OF EUROPE. By CHARLES DUFF. *Gollancz.* 6d.

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BANIA UNDER NAZI OPPRESSION. By T. ZAVALANI. *Free Albania Committee,* 14 Chepstow Crescent, W.11.
An interesting documented account of the Albanian beration movement.

Week-end Competitions

No. 753

t by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes are offered for a set of three rihews on smells, pleasant or unpleasant.

LES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and ould be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great rnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor first post on Monday, July 17th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves e right to print in part or as a whole any matter nt in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. nnot be returned. When no entries reach the quired standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 750

Set by Roger Marvell

It is rumoured that in a Rome otherwise mercifully almost intact the beautiful Protestant cemetery, containing the graves of Keats and Shelley, was damaged. The usual prizes are offered for a sonnet inspired by this story.

Report by Roger Marvell

A popular competition, enticing entries even from those who do not know that a sonnet has fourteen lines! Yorick (whom I believe to be a Papist) sent an amusing entry expressing the regrets of Private Praise-God Barebones that Rome had not been destroyed.

Still flaunts the Scarlet Woman in her home,
Amid her idol treasures as of yore;
Still Antichrist sits, throned with his whore,
With popish pomp in Babylonish Rome.

R. J. P. Hewison, Ethel Ashton Edward, Silvia Tatham, R. S. Jaffray, B. H., Nancy Gunter, Towanbucket, J. W. F. Hurford, L. F. G., and John Brook are highly commended. William Bliss and Little Billee gain prizes of one guinea, and the first prize of two guineas goes without hesitation to L. E. J. for a highly imaginative sonnet, which alludes to the pyramid of Caius Cestius that is the landmark of the Protestant Cemetery. I think the entries of Constance Sewell and Guy Innes worth printing, though I cannot accept either as a sonnet.

"Preserve, O Lord, thine ancient Vicarage!"
Thus prayed the Pontiff, and Jehovah spake:
"Go reconnoitre, Seraph; We must make
Some token payment to Man's righteous rage."
The great Air-marshal zoomed. Serene with age,
But spiritless to make his young heart ache,
Rome brooded. Back he climbed (and in his wake
The rocked stars bobbed to his bright fuselage).
"Lord, spare this city; once put out that light
'Twill not rekindle; Faith that could contrive such
loveliness is dead." "Then, Gabriel,
Pin-point yon pyramid—no bolt can smite
The radiance, inductable, alive,
Of Adonais and of Ariel."

L. E. J.

BEAUTY'S HOSTAGE
(Keats comes home)

Long had I grieved to lie in exile here
Under these alien Italian skies
That never were, to my fond English eyes,
As our boon, cloud-fleeced heavens one half so dear.
But on that day when, nearer and more near,
I heard the guns, their thunder made me wise;—
"*Poet! guard thou the beauty poet's prize!*"
So seemed the Urn to whisper in my ear.
Then was I glad of exile; then I knew
"*Let the blast fall upon my grave!*" I prayed
"*Scatter my dust, but save eternal Rome!*"
And lo! God's finger her destruction stayed
And I to Beauty am betrothed anew
And my released spirit now comes home.

WILLIAM BLISS

In, under the dark cypresses, he strode,
An English soldier, wearied with three years' fighting,
To seek an hour's discharge in this inviting
And shady solitude. His high-piled load
Unbuckling, he felt for the corner where was stowed
His ration of the spirit, his heart-delighting
Sole and sweet solace, of English poets' writing,
Lyric and love song, prophecy and ode.
But suddenly he beheld all round about
Woe and destruction, graves torn open wide,
And there two shattered marbles, where had lain
Two young immortals. The names burned, and he cried,
"By Man and his machines is poetry slain,
And from the ground the very stones cry out!"

LITTLE BILLEE

The skylarks drop, down through the murderous air
  Above the target area's black cloud,
And nightingales that wept for Ruth's despair
  Hide in the burning trees and sing aloud.
For the young dead, for those who still will die
  Like blossom caught by frost before it sets
For those who sang, or painted with fresh eye
  Whose lives contract to hatreds, or regrets.
Its surface scorched and torn, the living earth
  Absorbs and recreates below the graves
As the dead poets nourish all our dearth
  Flood the new streams, and pile the unflung waves
Nothing is lost of Shelley or of Keats
Winter to spring, the rhythm still repeats.

CONSTANCE SEWELL

HOW IT STRIKES THE SUB-EDITOR

"This *story?*" Where's the story? Give us *fact!*
  These half-baked rumours are no use to me.
Just how much graveyard has been left intact?
  Did air-bombs hit it, or artillery?
Did our man send it, or was it official?
  Who was this Shelley? What's his Christian name?
And Keats—there's not a ghost of an initial,
  Though he's a ghost. . . . The whole thing's pretty
    lame.
It don't say how their graves have been affected;
  They may be quite untouched. . . . Ring M. o. I.
And get the details: *I* can't be expected
  To write a headline for this chunk of pi;
And wire the correspondent: tell him flat
He can't charge linage for such tripe as *that!*

GUY INNES

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